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Strategy of Victory

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[Article by Col Gen V.N. Lobov: "The Strategy of Victory"]

[Text] The socialist nature of the Soviet state and its army established 70 years ago by Great October and the necessity of defending the fatherland have brought about the appearance of a new, truly scientific Soviet military strategy. Its fundamental provisions were worked out by V.I. Lenin. In putting down the bases for the policy of the world's first worker and peasant state and in leading its armed forces, he simultaneously established the principles of Soviet military strategy. In commenting here on the outstanding role of the leader, M.V. Frunze wrote: "For us and for the future generation of revolutionaries, Comrade Lenin provides brilliant examples of strategic...art."(1)

The establishing and development of Soviet military strategy occurred under the difficult conditions of the Civil War and military intervention. The content of this strategy was strongly influenced by the basic provisions worked out by V.I. Lenin of Soviet military doctrine and which from the very first days had a strictly defensive nature.

Soviet power in its legislative enactments such as the Decree on Peace, the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia as well as in the Appeal "To All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East" and other documents, has proclaimed a policy of peace and peaceful coexistence, recognition of the equality of all peoples and respect for their sovereignty. However, world imperialism and the internal counterrevolutionary forces, having rejected the peace proposals of the young socialist nation, initiated a Civil War. The task arose of the armed defense of the revolution and ensuring peaceful conditions for the building of socialism in our nation. "We are now defenders, from 25 October 1917," said V.I. Lenin. "we are in favor of the defense of the fatherland from this day on.... We are for the defense of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia."(2) The strictly scientific, realistic Soviet doctrine and the Soviet military strategy deriving from it made it possible to successfully carry out this task and to mobilize all the nation's forces and resources to repel aggression and defeat the main forces of interventionists and White Guards.

Due to the enormous efforts of the Communist Party and V.I. Lenin personally, a mass regular new-type army was created, fronts were organized and strategic reserves accumulated, military production and support for the operational army were established and the forms and methods of strategic actions and troop leadership were worked out. History knows no examples when the tasks of such scale and significance were carried out in such a short time and with such great effectiveness.

The position of the Soviet republic required from policy and military strategy the prompt determining of the main sector of armed combat. This task was successfully carried out by the party Central Committee headed by V.I. Lenin over the entire Civil War. The Red Army, depending upon the military-political situation, focused its efforts on combating the most dangerous enemy grouping: in the spring of 1919, on the Eastern Front against the Kolchak troops and after his defeat, on the Southern Front against Denikin (1919-1920). With a general over-all shortage of personnel and equipment, the Soviet Military Command skillfully massed them on the crucial sectors.

The basic type of operations by the Armed Forces to defeat the troops of the interventionists and domestic counterrevolution was an active strategic defensive and follow-up counteroffensives carried out, as a rule, by conducting successive offensive operations on the selected axes using the forces of several armies or one or two fronts (Southern and Southeastern in the autumn of 1919 and the Western and Southwestern in 1920). The aims of these operations were: the defeat of the large enemy groupings, the liberation of important political and economic areas (Urals, Siberia, the Ukraine, Northern Caucasus, Crimea and so forth) and the restoring of Soviet power in them. The particular nature of the Civil War was caused by the great scope of the strategic operations. These were conducted on a front from 500 to 1,400 km and continued to a depth of 400-1,000 km. The strategic counteroffensive often commenced after a stubborn defense or retreat by the Soviet troops. As a whole, military operations had a clearly expressed maneuver nature. Soviet military strategy at the same time defined the role of cavalry as the powerful mobile force of those times.

The problem of establishing strategic reserves was resolved in a new manner. In being guided by Lenin's thesis that "victory in a war will be on the side which has more reserves, more sources of strength and more tenacity coming from the very midst of the people,"(3) these were readied not only on the operational fronts and armies but also in the rear of the nation. The party and Komsomol mobilizations played an enormous role in preparing them, making it possible to quickly replenish troops on the main axes and increase their activeness and combat capability.

An important achievement in Soviet military strategy was the elaboration and practical mastery of the most effective forms and methods of strategic leadership over armed combat and this was based on the principle of the unity of political and military leadership, wide collegiality in discussing major questions. The defenses of the nation were directed by the Party Central Committee and the Council of Worker and Peasant Defense (from April 1920, the Council of Labor and Defense) headed by V.I. Lenin. These directed the efforts of the people and the army in carrying out the most important political, economic and military tasks, they provided effective planning and coordinated the activities of the front and rear.

The experience of the Civil War provided rich material for theoretical generalizations and practical conclusions and played an important role in the further development of Soviet military strategy during the interwar years. The works of S.S. Kamenev, M.V. Frunze, M.N. Tukhachevskiy, I.I. Vatsetis, B.M. Shaposhnikov, A.A. Svechin, V.K. Triandafillov and many others held a prominent place in the elaboration of its main provisions.

It was felt that a future war would assume a worldwide scale and would be conducted by mass armies. Operations would develop on vast land and sea expanses as well as in the air and they would have a decisive and fierce nature. The conclusion was drawn of the maneuver nature of future operations and the necessity of the complete preparation of the Armed Forces for conducting these. M.V. Frunze, in particular, pointed out: "...From the viewpoint of advisability and from the viewpoint of objective necessity, the Red Army, in preparing for a future war, should particularly cultivate its maneuvering qualities."(4)

Soviet military strategy felt that in fighting against the coalition of aggressor nations achieving the ultimate aims of the war would necessitate significant effort. In this context great attention was given to the questions of the mobilizational deployment of the armed forces and the stockpiling of strategic reserves. A thorough study was made of the probable methods by which an aggressor would start the war and the particular features of its initial period. As a result, by the mid-1930s, the important conclusion had been drawn that a war could commence by surprise.

In line with the rapid development of the weaponry of armed combat, great attention was given to determining the role and place of the armed services and combat arms in it as well as the methods of their employment and cooperation. In repudiating the notions existing in the West on the conduct of wars predominantly by one combat arm, Soviet military strategy proceeded from the view that victory could be achieved by the joint efforts of all the forces with the leading role played by the ground troops.

Of great significance of the development of Soviet military strategy was the theory worked out in the 1930s of an operation in depth and this was based upon the idea of defeating a large enemy grouping by the simultaneous action against it to the entire depth of the operational configuration, by the rapid breaching of the defenses and by the encirclement and complete destruction of the opposing enemy. In the process of its elaboration, there was further development for the views on the methods of conducting front (army) offensive operations and combat of formations.

It was assumed that a strategic offensive with an over-all superiority in forces over the enemy would be carried out, as a rule, by conducting simultaneous or successive strategic operations by the fronts. The strategic defensive was considered a legitimate type of combat. In the front

defensive operations the troops were to hold the occupied areas stubbornly and cover the important axes in order to repulse the enemy offensive, to cause it damage and create favorable conditions for a counteroffensive.

Thus, in the interwar period, Soviet military strategy took a significant step ahead. As a whole, it correctly considered the experience of the commenced World War II. However, not all the questions and problems were completely worked out. This could not help but be influenced by the mass repressions which the military personnel was subjected to at the end of the 1930s, including many talented military leaders and scientists.

The cult of personality of I.V. Stalin and the violating of democratic leadership principles were also apparent in the departure from the main provisions of Lenin's defensive military policy and in the interpretation of not only the military-technical but also the political aspect there began to be a predominance of trends expressing a desire to shift "military operations onto the territory of the attacking enemy..."(5) and to the assertion that the Worker-Peasant Red Army would be the most aggressive army that ever advanced."(6)

The distortion of military doctrine involved serious errors in elaborating a number of theoretical provisions of strategy and in carrying out measures to prepare the Armed Forces for war. As a result, the problems of the strategic defensive, the pulling back of large masses of troops from under the enemy strike and the going over to a counteroffensive had been poorly worked out. The general recognition of the importance of the initial period of the war with its surprise unleashing were not fully backed up by practical measures to increase troop readiness to repulse aggression. In particular, proceeding from the provisions of military doctrine, there were plans to repulse the first thrust using a limited number of covering troops while the basic forces of the Soviet Army would be deployed for going over to a decisive offensive with the shifting of hostilities to enemy territory. The variation of an extended strategic defensive was not assumed and because of this the establishing of a defensive grouping of the Armed Forces was not planned.

These plans stemmed from the erroneous assumption that the enemy would commence hostilities only with a portion of its forces with their subsequent build-up in the course of the war. In actuality, the Nazis launched a thrust with the main forces which had been concentrated and deployed ahead of time along the western Soviet frontiers. All of this to a large degree predetermined the unsuccessful outcome of the border engagements and the initial period of the war as a whole. The Great Patriotic War was a harsh testing for Soviet military doctrine and required an active search for solving the most important problems of armed combat.

The political goals of the Soviet Union were determined by the socialist state system and by the liberation nature of the war forced on the Soviet people by Nazi Germany.

V.I. Lenin pointed out that "the character of the political goal has a crucial impact on the conduct of the war..."(7) For achieving these the belligerents employ all the forces at their disposal and the decisive ones here are the military, that is, the armed forces.

Having attacked the USSR, the Nazis endeavored to destroy the world's first socialist country and enslave the peoples of the Soviet Union and many others. Under these conditions, the political aims of the war consisted in eliminating the danger hanging over the USSR, expelling the German troops from the Soviet land, helping the European peoples get free of Nazi suppression, create conditions for the free development of peoples along the path of peace and progress and completely eliminate the hated regime. From these stemmed the specific strategic tasks: the elaboration and implementation of the plans for the mobilizing of forces, the organizational development of the armed forces, their strategic deployment and use on land, in the air and at sea; determining the most effective methods and forms for conducting the war, campaigns and strategic operations, leadership over the course of armed combat, the organization of strategic cooperation between the fronts, groups of fronts and armed services; logistic support for the needs of the war.

The treacherous attack by the aggressor and its superiority on the axes of the main thrusts prevented the armies of the first strategic echelon from going over to the defensive. This defensive had been organized under conditions when the Soviet Armed Forces had not yet completed mobilization and operational deployment. Due to the enemy's superiority, particularly on the axes of its main thrusts, due to the poorly conceived and unprepared defenses, the weak motorizing of the formations and field forces as well as shortcomings in the organization of command and all-round support, the Soviet troops were forced to retreat into the interior of the nation. However, under these conditions they were able not only to reduce the rate of advance of the enemy shock groupings but also halt the offensive along the entire front.

Of great significance in conducting the strategic defensive was the effective and prompt use of the strategic reserves and their skillful maneuvering from some axes to others. This made it possible to resolve the problems of restoring a breached strategic front. In the summer of 1941, Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] formed the Reserve Front on the western sector for carrying out these tasks, in the summer of 1942, there were the Voronezh and Stalingrad Fronts on the southwestern sector and in the autumn of 1942, the Southwestern Front.

In the course of the defensive actions of the Soviet Armed Forces, the forms of strategic defensive operations by the fronts and groups of fronts underwent further development and these from August 1941 and in 1942 were conducted, as a rule, in zones to 700 km wide and to a depth of 150-300 km.(8) This broadened the

opportunity to pool the efforts of the forces, Armed Services and combat arms participating in them and to more effectively coordinate their actions under a common command. The employment by the Soviet Army of active forms of combat on the strategic defensive made it possible to thwart the aggressor's plans, to cause it serious losses, to hold important lines, economic and administrative centers and create conditions for going over to a counteroffensive. No state in Western Europe which had been subjected to Nazi aggression had been able to resolve similar problems.

The development of the socialist military economy, the more effective use of weapons, the improvement of the organizational structure of the Armed Services and combat arms on the basis of the acquired combat experience and the forming of new large reserves substantially told on the methods of carrying out strategic tasks. In expelling the enemy from the territory of the Soviet Union, the basic type of military operation of the Soviet Armed Forces was the counteroffensive begun as Rostov, Tikhvin and Moscow at the end of 1941 and then carried out at Stalingrad (1942) and Kursk (1943) and ending in 1944 with the liberation of our territory.

Upon reaching the state frontier, the Soviet Army, in accord with its Leninist international policy and the international obligations assumed by our government in 1944-1945, began a campaign for the sake of liberating the people who had fallen under the yoke of Nazi Germany and also launched crushing blows in the aim of completing the defeat of the aggressor in its own lair.

The actions of the Soviet Armed Forces to liberate the enslaved people and to finally defeat the Nazi military machine were carried out predominantly in the form of a strategic offensive and this included a system of simultaneously and successfully conducted operations following a single plan and under the leadership of Hq SHC. As a rule, these were conducted by groups of fronts together with the combined Air Forces and Air Defense Troops, by the partisans, and on the maritime sectors also by naval forces, and was characterized by a growing scope and high effectiveness. While in 1942-1943, this encompassed around one-half of the total length of the Soviet-German Front, in the campaigns beginning with the summer of 1944, the offensive was conducted successfully or simultaneously along its entire extent. The strategic offensive operations involved from 100 to 200 divisions, there were 20,000-40,000 guns and mortars, from 3,000 to 6,000 tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount] and from 2,000 to 7,500 aircraft fighting. Certain of these operations developed along a front of 800-1,000 km and were conducted to a depth of 500-600 km. As a result of these operations, the enemy groupings consisting of from 50 to 100 divisions were defeated.(9)

During the war years, enormous experience was gained in the skillful choice of the axis of the main thrust considering the political, economic and particularly the

military factors, that is, where in accord with the situational conditions the maximum results could be achieved. During the summer-autumn campaign of 1943 and in the winter of 1944, the largest groupings were defeated by launching the main thrusts on the southwestern axis and prerequisites were created for liberating the European countries. The main thrust on the western strategic axis in the summer of 1944 and in the winter of 1945 ensured the shortest route to the vitally important centers and the capital of Nazi Germany. The crushing of the major Wehrmacht grouping here favored the rapid defeat of the enemy and the victorious conclusion of the war.

Instructive also for today is the fact that Hq SHC decisively massed its forces for achieving the set goals on the selected sectors of the main thrusts. As a rule, fighting in the groupings were several front-level field forces including from one-quarter to one-half (and sometimes more) of all the forces of the operational army. Particular attention was given to the quality of the assault groupings. These usually included tank armies, tank and mechanized corps, air armies, artillery of the Supreme High Command Reserve [RVGK], as well as other special units and formations. These groupings were reinforced with long-range aviation, National Air Defense Troops and on the maritime sectors, by the forces and formations of the Navy.

Thus, in the 1944 summer-autumn campaign, for launching the main thrust the width of which was 26 percent of the extent of the entire Soviet-German Front, four front formations were employed (these included all six tank armies), up to 40 percent of the personnel, 48 percent of the guns and mortars, 77 percent of the tanks and SAU and 53 percent of the aircraft. Moreover, in a majority of instances large partisan forces were drawn to these sectors and the main efforts in the area of troop logistical support were concentrated here. Here also were sent the main strategic reserves. Here were representatives of Hq SHC who provided aid to the command of the fronts in seeking out optimum solutions and in resolving all questions.

The high art of the Soviet Command and its capacity to precisely anticipate events were very aptly described by the American journalist Ralph Ingersoll. "The Russians clearly looked at the battlefield as a chessboard; they calculated for many moves ahead, they forced the Germans to constantly shift their forces in order to repel the Russian offensive now on one and then another sector of an enormous chessboard running from the Baltic to the mouth of the Danube. The Germans could never equal the Russians in an understanding of what was happening on the board and evidently after the German generals had exhausted their first, prewar staff studies, the Germans never had a true, fully worked out plan for defeating the Russians." (10)

The rapid development of operations to a great depth was also explained by the high military skill of the Soviet troops, by the level of leadership over the Armed Forces

on the part of Headquarters and command of the troops by all levels of commanders, by the continuous supply of everything necessary for conducting combat and by the high military-political state of the personnel.

The Soviet Army had completely mastered the art of preparing and conducting strategic offensive operations to surround and destroy large enemy groupings. Each of these was marked by an uniqueness and originality of concept and by the employment of new means and forms of military operations. The surrounding of enemy troops was basically achieved by launching pincer strikes, by breaching the front on several axes with the subsequent development of the attacks in depth and the coming out in the flank and rear of the main forces in the operational depth and the pressing of the enemy to the seacoast. Of crucial significance in the surrounding, splitting and destroying of the large Nazi groupings was the commitment to the breach of mobile groups (tank armies, horse-mechanized groups, tank, mechanized and cavalry corps), and in cooperation with the aviation the launching of rapid and deep thrusts against the retreating enemy troops and reserves.

Within the counteroffensive of the Soviet Armed Forces, encirclement operations were carried out the scale of which has not been known in military history. The Battle of Stalingrad which ended with the surrounding and eliminating of a Nazi troop grouping some 330,000 strong, in essence, was just the start of many subsequent offensive operations such as the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy, Belorussian, Lwow-Sandomierz, Iasi-Kishinev, Budapest, East Prussian, Berlin and Prague. Suffice it to point out that of the 130 enemy divisions destroyed in 1944, over one-half was destroyed and captured in encirclement operations.

There was also the method of defeating the enemy of launching deep splitting thrusts in the aim of dividing it into pieces. This was the case, for example, in the liberation of the Right Bank Ukraine and in the Vistula-Oder Operation.

Experience showed that the achieving of a turning point in the course of a war, the wresting of strategic initiative from the enemy and the going over from the defensive to the counteroffensive comprised one of the most difficult tasks of military art. The Soviet Command successfully carried this out in the course of the counteroffensive at Moscow, Stalingrad and Kursk. In these operations, the looming crisis of the assault capabilities of the Nazi Army was promptly detected, troops were covertly concentrated, counterstrike groups were organized, and the time was skillfully chosen for moving from the defensive to the counteroffensive. As a result, a major strategic success was achieved, the advancing groupings were defeated and the counteroffensive grew into a general strategic offensive on a broad front.

The Soviet Command successfully solved the problem of strategic cooperation and these consisted in coordinating the actions of the fronts, groups of fronts, long-range aviation, the Navy, national air defense troops as well as the partisans in terms of goal, place and time for achieving the common aims of the operations. Cooperation with the long-range aviation was achieved by employing it in the interests of the strategic operations of the groups of fronts, with the Navy and river flotillas by conducting joint actions on the maritime and riverine axes. Measures were coordinated with the National Air Defense Troops to combat enemy aviation in defending the rear facilities of the fronts and armies, and with the partisans in the area of attacking the enemy lines of communications, seizing crossings and the most important facilities.

In the liberating of the European peoples, experience was gained in organizing cooperation with units, formations and field forces of Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia which were participating in the operations. Here a large role was played by personal meetings and direct contacts of the commanders as well as the exchange of operations groups. This ensured a unity of the understanding of tasks and the effective control of troops in the joint actions.

The brilliant victories of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War were achieved due to the wise leadership of the Communist Party. It became a truly fighting party and its Central Committee was a fighting staff, the political and superior strategic leadership of the nation and the Armed Forces.

In the course of the war, an ordered system of centralized strategic leadership of armed combat came into being. Great experience was gained in planning and controlling the field forces of all the Armed Services. Strategic leadership was provided by Hq SHC. Its executive bodies were the General Staff, the staffs of the sectors and fronts, the representatives of Headquarters and the bodies of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the People's Commissariat of the Navy. Centralization of strategic leadership was combined with the calling in by Hq SHC of the commanders and military council members of the fronts as well as other responsible leaders and specialists in planning the operation.

Thus, Soviet military strategy during the years of the Great Patriotic War successfully carried out the tasks which befell it. It demonstrated its superiority over Nazi strategy by skillfully employing all the capabilities which resided in the Soviet state and socioeconomic system. The experience of the Great Patriotic War showed that strategy can only successfully carry out its tasks when it proceeds from a strictly scientific doctrine. The departure from Lenin's ideas of military doctrine on the eve and at the start of the war was the cause of major setbacks for Soviet strategy, and, conversely, the subsequent following of Lenin's doctrinal concepts was the guarantee for the brilliant victories of the USSR Armed Forces.

Soviet military strategy was improved in a number of areas. The first of these was the more effective and conforming use of the economic and military capabilities of the nation and the Armed Forces as well as the moral and foreign policy factors. The essence of the second area is the more effective carrying out of organizational tasks confronting the superior strategic leadership bodies, the improving in the style of their work and this is particularly instructive for present-day conditions.

The experience gained during the years of the last war in selecting the methods and forms of defeating the enemy, employing the Armed Services and combat arms and in resolving many other problems, having enriched Soviet military art, has become a firm basis for the further development of military science.

With the end of the Great Patriotic War, Soviet military strategy continued to be improved considering the new balance of military-political forces in the world. Here the increased economic and defense might of the USSR and the fundamental qualitative changes in military affairs based upon the achievements of scientific and technical progress have had and continue to have a substantial impact.

Having switched to peacetime, creative labor, the CPSU and the Soviet government, loyal to a peace-loving policy, were forced to consider that the governments of the previous Allies in the anti-Hitler coalition had abandoned the agreed-upon principles for the postwar organization of the world. International imperialism set out on an outright preparation for a new war and conducting a policy "from a position of strength" vis-a-vis the USSR and the other socialist countries. The appearance of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, the advance in other types of weapons and equipment and the introduction of them into the armed forces brought about fundamental changes in the views on the nature of war and the methods of conducting military operations and demanded a revision of many theoretical provisions of military art as a whole. In this situation, Soviet military strategy was confronted with a series of fundamentally new tasks the most important of which were: research on the nature and methods of conducting a nuclear war, the organizational development of the Armed Forces and their training considering the repulsing of a possible massed nuclear strike by the aggressors, the maintaining of constant high combat readiness of the troops (naval forces) and the ensuring of their organized entry into the war under any conditions of its outbreak.

The main provisions of Soviet military strategy are based upon a profound awareness that in the present-day situation, where enormous arsenals of nuclear weapons have been stockpiled representing a danger for the fate of mankind itself, a nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political aims. "At present," pointed out the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev, "it is apparent to everyone that the old

notions about war as a means of achieving political aims have outlived themselves. In the nuclear age these obsolete dogmas foster a policy which can lead to a universal conflagration."(11)

Under these conditions, in accord with the defensive military strategy of the Warsaw Pact, the main tasks of Soviet military strategy are to prevent a war and elaborate the methods for repelling possible aggression.

Soviet military strategy, in being based upon the Marxist-Leninist methodology and on the advantages of the socialist social and state system, is in constant creative development, embodying acquired experience and all that is new provided by the present-day scientific and technical revolution. Of crucial significance for the shaping of strategic views is the leading role of the CPSU and its Central Committee which are carrying out the Leninist policy of peace and the defense of the victories of socialism.

Footnotes

1. M.V. Frunze, "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya" [Selected Works], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 293.

2. V.I. Lenin, *SSS* [Complete Collected Works], Vol 35, p 395.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol 39, p 237.

4. M.V. Frunze, *op. cit.*, pp 64-65.

5. "Vremennyy polevoy ustav RKKA (PU-36)" [Provisional RKKA Field Manual (PU-36)], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1937, p 9.

6. "Polevoy ustav RKKA (PU-39). Proyekt" [RKKA Field Manual (PU-39). Draft], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1939, p 9.

7. "Leninskiy sbornik" [Lenin Collection], Vol XI, p 429.

8. "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna. Itogi i uroki" [World War II. Results and Lessons], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, p 299.

9. "Sovetskaya Voenaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 7, 1979, p 562.

10. R. Ingersoll, "Sovershenno sekretno" [Top Secret], Moscow, Gosudarstvennoye Izd-vo Inostrannoy Literatury, 1947, p 418.

11. PRAVDA, 27 July 1987.

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Operations Directorate of General Staff During Great Patriotic War

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[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art," by Maj Gen A.F. Antonov, candidate of military sciences: "Operations Directorate of the General Staff in the Years of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] In October 1939, in the General Staff the Operations Directorate(1) was set up on the basis of the First (Operations) Section and this was brought about by the sharp increase in the scope of the tasks in the area of the organizational development and training of the Soviet Armed Forces due to the commenced World War II. The Corps Commissar I.V. Smorodinov (subsequently, Col Gen) was appointed its chief. The Operations Directorate became the main working body of the General Staff and organized its work in close cooperation with the other directorates and sections, the staffs of the combat arms and services of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense].

The situation which developed unfavorably on the fronts with the start of the Great Patriotic War and the forced going over of the Soviet troops to the strategic defensive forced the General Staff to focus chief attention on carrying out operational-strategic tasks. This brought about **organizational restructurings of the Operations Directorate**. In August 1941, in the place of the 12 sections which had existed prior to this, 8 sectors were set up: Northern, Northwestern, Western, Central, Southwestern, Southern, Near Eastern and Far Eastern.(2) At the same time, in the directorate a special group of operations officers was established for troop liaison and this soon became an independent group which in 1943 began to be called by Hq SHC the Corps of General Staff Officers. Maj Gen A.M. Vasilevskiy was appointed the head of the directorate and at the same time the deputy chief of the General Staff.

However, such an organization under the conditions of the rapidly changing military situation in 1941-1942 was flawed. In the first place, the main sectors (Northwestern, Western, Central and Southwestern) did not fully provide leadership over several fronts and the numerousness of the sections split the forces, distracting them from carrying out the main task of dependable control over the troop (naval) operations. Moreover, the number of fronts was constantly changed. For this reason, in May 1942, sectors were set up in the Operations Directorate predominantly for each front. The sections of organizational-reporting, operational movements and signals were transferred to the newly established directorates of the General Staff. In March 1942, the Section for Operational Preparations was turned into the Information Sector. The excluding of a portion of the sections from the Operations Directorate freed the latter from

carrying out many tasks not inherent to it and made it possible to focus the main efforts on doing operational and informational work in the interests of the General Staff and Hq SHC.(3)

In 1943, the Soviet Army once and for all took the strategic initiative. The formations and units of Poland and Czechoslovakia which had been organized on Soviet territory joined in the armed combat. The scope of combat operations and the volume of tasks which had to be effectively carried out increased unusually. This, in turn, forced the incorporation of changes in the command structure. From May the Operations Directorate was headed by Lt Gen S.M. Shtemenko. He held this position until the war's end.

In June 1943, the chief of the General Staff in the aim of systematizing the work of the officer representatives in the operational army took a decision to distribute them over the sections of the Operations Directorate calculating five-ten men per front and one or two per separate army and per air army.(4) This was explained by the fact that in the work of the officers representing the General Staff on the fronts there were organizational shortcomings which had a negative effect upon the execution of the tasks confronting them.

The generals and officers of the Operations Directorate, as representatives of the General Staff, provided great help in training and organizing the staffs of the allied formations and units. Constantly being in the troop organizations, they fought along with their brothers in arms until the war's end.

In the subsequent years there were no major organizational changes. Only the sectors, having carried out their tasks, were abolished and in the event of necessity new ones were set up.

The style and methods of work of Operations Directorate developed as experience was gained and as the collective was organized and shaped. The work methods developed before the war were not always applicable. The transition of the directorate to activities under wartime conditions occurred without sufficient clarity and rather slowly. But the situation on the fronts changed abruptly each day and became more complicated. There was a greater number of tasks, and a flow of instructions, orders, directives, requests, statements and so forth. The collecting of situational data was in the forefront. The attempts to assemble objective information on the enemy, the nature and direction of its actions, to analyze these and provide corresponding information to the leadership during the first days of the war, in employing the old work methods, often did not lead to the desired results.

In the aim of eliminating the existing shortcomings and successful leadership over the combat of the fronts, it was essential first of all to clearly define the limits of responsibility and the range of functional duties of each section, sector, the chiefs and their subordinates. For this

reason, in November 1941, instructions were worked out and approved establishing the responsibility of the chief of the sector for his area and for constant complete guidance for Hq SHC and the chief of the General Staff concerning the situation on it as well as for the prompt issuing of directives, orders and instructions to the troops.

The chief of a sector was always to have exhaustive information on the state of affairs on the front (about the enemy and his own troops); work out the draft directives, orders and instructions of Headquarters and the chief of the General Staff; compile statements, the operational calculations and requests for logistic support of the troops; exercise control over the course of combat and the measures of the operational and combat training of nonfighting fronts and reserve formations. Moreover, he was entrusted with handling the requests of the fronts and armies; he was to promptly work out the draft reports and report them to the chief of the General Staff and to Headquarters; inspect the fulfillment of the given directives, orders and instructions, and ensure their rapid issuing to their destination; keep the reporting and operational maps; maintain continuous contact with the fronts and armies and organize the work of their subordinates.(5)

Thus, after carrying out a series of organizational measures, after clearly delimiting functional duties and eliminating the serious shortcomings disclosed during the first days of the war, the directorate only by the winter of 1941 was able to switch to working according to wartime conditions.

One of the reasons for the lack of coordination and discrepancies in the activities of the Operations Directorate was the frequent changing of its chiefs and who were changed eight times from the start of the war until May 1943. Gens K.G. Malandin, V.M. Zlobin, A.M. Vasilevskiy, P.I. Bodin, N.F. Vatutin, V.D. Ivanov, S.M. Teteshkin and A.I. Antonov over the short period they remained in this position (3-4 months) naturally were unable to organize clear, effective and planned work.

By the autumn of 1943, the Operations Directorate had a highly trained, close-knit and experienced collective of operators. A style of work had been developed which made it possible to thoroughly analyze the situation and proceeding from it to set the tasks, to calculate everything in terms of time and available materiel, and to back up each operational measure and any proposal. The workday conditionally began at 0700 hours. From that time the chiefs of the sectors began collecting information over the previous night. At the same time, with the representatives of the other directorates and sections of the General Staff using a map they clarified the enemy's position, and generalized data on the state of our troops. At any moment the officers of the sectors should be ready to report on the situation and state their ideas on employing the troops of the sector. With the representatives of Hq SHC they traveled to the fronts and provided

the latter with the requisite materials. The chief of the directorate, his deputies and the chiefs of the sectors personally worked out the most important and urgent documents for reporting to the chief of the General Staff and to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and took part in preparing and conducting command-staff exercises and drills for the field forces and formations in the Reserve of the Supreme High Command [RVGK].

As the materials were ready, the chiefs of the sectors reported to the chief of the Operations Directorate who, by 0900 hours himself had generalized data on the enemy and our own troops, a schedule of troop movements as well as information on the available reserves and their state. At the same time, one of his deputies prepared the first morning combat report. At 1000 hours this was assigned by the chief of the directorate and reported by him to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

After the morning, the chief of the Operations Directorate received the chiefs of the other sectors, the chiefs of the combat arms and services, he clarified the situation on the fronts with their commanders and studied the reports from the representatives of Headquarters and the General Staff officers on the fronts. In the sectors routine work continued to generalize the data on the situation for the first half of the day. At 1500 hours, full information was reported to the chief of the General Staff, as a rule, by the deputy chief of the Operations Directorate. Sometimes the chiefs of those sectors where the situation was particularly acute at the given moment were invited to the briefing. Moreover, they reported to the chief of the General Staff how the briefing had gone with the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, what instructions had been received from him and what prepared directives and orders for the troops had been submitted for signature.

By 2100 hours, the final report for the day had been prepared along with the maps for each front with the situational data plotted on them and showing the position of our troops as well as a composite map for the entire Soviet-German Front. After 2300 hours, these materials were submitted to Hq SHC. The leadership and the officers of the Operations Directorate worked at this pace until the war's end. Their work was not easy. Without any consideration to time or physical and mental stress they effectively carried out many diverse problems. "The enormous scope of this work," wrote Army Gen S.M. Shtemenko, "and its urgency made service here extremely fatiguing. They worked to the limit of their ability, knowing in advance that they would be strictly reprimanded for even the slightest error." (6) Not sparing themselves for the sake of the common cause, the generals and officers showed a feeling of high responsibility and unprecedented capacity for work. Showing the greatest productiveness in work were the deputy chiefs of the directorate, Gens A.A. Gryzlov, N.A. Lomov, I.N. Ryzhkov, the chiefs of the sectors Gens M.A. Kraskovets, S.I. Guneyev, G.M. Chumakov,

V.D. Utkin, V.F. Mernov, S.M. Yenyukov, N.Ye. Sokolov, K.F. Vasilchenko, Ya.A. Kutsev, M.N. Kochergin, S.A. Petrovskiy and S.P. Platonov, the operations officers A.P. Chumakin, G.G. Yeliseyev, N.F. Yanin, A.S. Bashnagyan and others who subsequently became generals. (7)

Many of the generals and officers who worked in the Operations Directorate and gained great experience in operations work during the war years were promoted to command and staff positions in the operational army, they commanded fronts and armies and headed their staffs. Among them were Gens A.M. Vasilevskiy (subsequently MSU), N.F. Vatutin, A.N. Bogolyubov, V.V. Kurasov, P.I. Bodin, G.K. Malandin, N.M. Sharokhin and others.

The planning of operations held a significant place in the activities of the Operations Directorate. The initial sketch of the over-all plan of an operation was usually made in the directorate. As a rule, one or more rarely two officers were assigned to work it out. Then the circle of persons working on it was increased due to the operations and other directorates and sections of the General Staff as well as the representatives from the front or group of fronts. The work was carried out consecutively and at strictly established times. The directives and orders were usually written by the same persons, they were short in volume (one or two pages) but extensive in content and excluded any ambiguous interpretation. The over-all plan was submitted to the chief of the General Staff and then for approval to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Only after this did the staffs of the fronts and armies begin the detailed planning of the operation and the working out of orders, directives, combat instructions and other planning documents.

In the work of the Operations Directorate particular attention was given to **maintaining constant contact with the command of the fronts**. In addition to the leadership of the Operations Directorate and the sectors, this task was carried out up to the end of 1943 also by the corps of officers assigned to the fronts which was specially organized under the General Staff. This corps was headed by Gens N.I. Dubinin, Sh.N. Geniatullin and F.T. Peregodov. The subsequent incorporation of the officers from the corps in the TOE of the Operations Directorate (the corresponding sectors) made it possible to improve significantly the contact with the command of the fronts and their staffs, to effectively influence the adopted decisions and provide complete aid in continuous command and logistic support.

The range of duties for the liaison officers in the troops and staffs was rather broad. They inspected and reported on the position and state of the troops and the supply of everything requisite for life and combat. Many of them repeatedly fell into complicated combat situations, they were wounded and received high governmental decorations. Surrendering their lives in fighting for the motherland were Capts S.V. Berezkin, S.F. Safonov and N.M.

Shikhalev, Majs V.M. Tkachev, K.N. Nikulin, Ye.S. Kukhar, M.Ya. Dyshlenko, A.T. Shiyon and P.M. Zargaryan, Lt Cols I.M. Burlak, V.N. Venediktov, A.D. Markov, V.F. Lyskin, A.A. Pzdneyakov and others.(8)

The General Staff officers were constantly in the staffs, at the command and observation posts and auxiliary command posts; they visited the troop positions; they inspected defensive works, communication centers, transport routes, airfields, dumps, production, repair and medical facilities; they interrogated prisoners, deserters and local inhabitants; they became familiar with captured enemy documents and enemy weapons; they corresponded and spoke with the General Staff and employed all means of transport and communications. It was their duty also to make certain that the staffs and troops strictly observed military secrecy particularly to ensure surprise for the start of an operation, to report on the most instructive combat and operations, to generalize the experience of the employment of new weapons, tactical procedures and methods of command employed by our troops and the enemy and to constantly keep their working map. They worked in close contact with the commanders and chiefs of staff of the fronts and armies and were often present in the announcing of decisions by the commanders as well as at military council sessions. In turn, the chiefs of staff of the fronts and the armies, in giving instructions to the field forces and formations for the forthcoming operation, as a rule, informed the General Staff officer about the nature of the decision taken and the orders issued.

When the commanders of fronts and the chiefs of staff visited the General Staff, the chief of the General Staff received them without fail in the presence of the chief of the Operations Directorate and a representative of the corresponding sector. All the proposals of the front command were examined jointly and conclusions drawn up on them.

The organization of **operational information** was of important significance in the work of the Operations Directorate. This task was assigned to the Operational Preparations Section (from March 1942, Information Section). This worked out and distributed under a special list such informational documents as the operational summaries, the reports to Hq SHC and the operations guidelines (up to 31 December 1941).

Each day by 0830 hours and 2030 hours the Soviet Information Bureau was sent releases for subsequent publication in the open press and for broadcasting by radio. These described the situation on the Soviet-German Front briefly with the indicating of important events and facts. In addition to working out the designated documents, the Information Section during the entire war kept a map of the operational situation on the fronts for each day, and from 18 January 1942 up to victory with an interval of every 3-5 days, a strategic situational map.

The dates and the procedure for submitting operational information by the staffs of the fronts and the separate armies to the Operational Directorate were repeatedly clarified by the corresponding instructions of the General Staff. In line with the discovered serious shortcomings in the organization of information, on 5 June 1943, a directive was issued which determined the levels which should possess complete data on the operational situation and the effective and numerical strength of the fronts, districts and armies as well as for the entire Soviet Army as a whole in addition to the procedure for keeping count and submitting reports.

One of the important areas of work for the operations directorate during the war years was the **organization and leadership of the operational training** of command personnel and staffs of the nonfighting fronts, the military districts and the field forces withdrawn into the Headquarters reserve. For each period of instruction (summer and winter), a subject corresponding to their purpose was worked out for them and a directive issued on the operational training of the troops. Adjustments and changes were incorporated by additional orders. Here the instructions were marked by a high level of detail. For example, in addition to the Directive on Operational Training of the Far Eastern Front for the Winter of 1943-1944, the front commander, along with the subjects of the initial period of the war, was instructed to include in the plan a number of questions concerning subsequent operations with the conducting of military games on maps for some of them.

For further increasing and systematizing knowledge on operational art and tactics of field forces and formations, it was proposed that they plan and organize the study of the principles of an army operation (offensive and defensive) and the actions of a reinforced rifle corps in the main types of combat using the method of group exercises and military map games. For raising the level of staff efficiency and for increasing the skills of officers on all levels of staffs, they recommended the regular holding of staff drills to master practical skills relating to the positions held and involvement in operational training measures conducted according to the plans of the Pacific Fleet and Amur Naval Flotilla.(9)

The Operations Directorate not only worked out directives on operational training but also provided practical leadership and supervision over the course of its conduct as well as summing up the results. The summary plans for operational and combat training, the over-all concepts for the command-staff exercises and military games of the inactive fronts and armies, the Pacific Fleet and Amur Naval Flotilla were systematically reviewed in the directorate, specific comments were made on them and recommendations given. In particular, the chief of staff of the Far Eastern Front in February 1944 was instructed that in the operational and combat training plan submitted by him for the winter of 1943-1944 there was no unified method of planning in the front's armies.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the army commanders did not personally conduct a single combined-arms exercise, assigning this to other individuals and taking on only the conduct of games. In the front an excessive number of various assemblies had been planned without a clearly expressed goal and subject.(10)

In the directive, summing up the results of the operational training of the Transcaucasian Front for the 1943 summer period, it was recommended that the entire system of operational training be so organized that during the winter training period the generals and officers of the staffs would steadily increase their firm theoretical and practical knowledge conforming to the present-day requirements of operational art. According to this document, the main forms of operational training were to be the conducting of command-staff exercises with communications equipment and troop exercises. Particular attention had to be paid to the carefulness of their organization and the instructiveness of the content as well as to the selection and training of skilled umpires. As additional forms they recommended holding reports and lectures on the materials of the Great Patriotic War and the operations of the Japanese armies in China and on the Pacific.(11)

Thus, regardless of the fact that the Operations Directorate concentrated its main efforts on ensuring the organization and leadership over the armed combat of the operational fronts, due to the carrying out of effective operational training in the nonfighting fronts, their combat readiness and capability in the East during the fighting in the West were on a rather high level.

Relations and contacts with the other directorates (sections) of the General Staff held an important place in the daily activities of the operations directorate. During the war years in holding a leading position among them, the Operations Directorate did not report to the chief of the General Staff, a single question requiring the taking of a final decision without seeking their agreement. With many chiefs of the directorates (sections) of the General Staff, the chief of the Operations Directorate and the chiefs of the sectors and sections had personal contacts and carried out the posed tasks by common effort.

In the Operations Directorate great attention was given to **studying, generalizing and disseminating the experience of the war** in the operational army as well as in training reserves in the military districts and command personnel in the military schools. This task was carried out not only independently, but also in close contact initially with the section and later the Directorate of the General Staff on the Use of the War's Experience. The materials worked out jointly told positively on the combat successes of our troops and contributed to the development of Soviet military art during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 7a, inv. 913, file 1, sheet 156.
2. Ibid., inv. 68, file 1, sheets 1-4.
3. Ibid., file 2, sheets 71-82, 265-270, 310-311.
4. Ibid., inv. 73, file 4, sheet 91.
5. Ibid., folio 19a, inv. 1078, file 2, sheets 34-36.
6. S.M. Shtemenko, "Generalnyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff During the War Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, 2d Revised and Supplemented Edition, Book 1, 1975, p 180.
7. Ibid., pp 191-193.
8. Ibid., p 201.
9. TsAMO, folio 48a, inv. 2, file 29, sheets 95-99.
10. Ibid., inv. 3, file 26, sheets 384-385.
11. Ibid., inv. 2, file 29, sheets 107-112.

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Long-Range Air Strikes Against Enemy Airfields
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[Article by Col V.V. Anuchin, candidate of military sciences: "Strikes of Long-Range Aviation Against Enemy Airfields"; the article was written from the experience of the Great Patriotic War]

[Text] With the start of the Great Patriotic War, the enemy seized air supremacy and this put the Soviet Troops under difficult conditions. The developing situation required the rapid defeat of the Nazi German air groupings. Our Air Forces carried out this task in the course of daily combat as well as in specially conducted air operations. Nazi aviation was destroyed chiefly air combat as well as at airfields. The long-range aviation (ADD)(1) numbering more than 1,300 Il-4, TB-3 and TB-7 aircraft took an active part in attacking its base areas.

The ADD formations began regular bombing of enemy airfields in July 1941. They participated in a massed raid conducted upon instructions of Hq SHC in the aim of weakening the opposing air grouping in a zone from the Baltic to Black Seas. At 0300 hours on 8 July, 125 long-range bombers made bombing strikes against 14 airfields. After these the Air Forces of the Northern,

Northwestern, Southwestern and Southern Fronts attacked another 28 airfields.(2) As a result, a large number of enemy aircraft was destroyed and damaged. Subsequently, when the Nazi Army had advanced deep into our territory and bombing raids against Moscow were possible, the Soviet Command also undertook countermeasures. During the period from 22 July through 15 August, the ADD formations attacked 67 enemy airfields on the western sector and this significantly reduced the activeness of enemy aviation.(3)

The Directive from Hq SHC of 10 October 1941 to the Commander of the Soviet Army Air Forces, Gen P.F. Zhigarev, stated: "According to data supplied by agents, on 12-13 October along the entire Western Front, the enemy intends to conduct a massed air strike with 1,000-1,500 aircraft against the industrial and aviation centers, railroad junctions, bridges, crossings, staffs, railheads and troop battle formations." In carrying out Headquarters' demands to decisively destroy Nazi aviation at its airfields, an air operation was conducted from 11 through 18 October involving the Air Forces of the Northwestern, Western, Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern Fronts as well as the ADD formations. Over a period of 8 days, at night and during the day, the frontal (tactical) aviation attacked the close airfields while the long-range bombers hit 30 airfields which were most distant from the front line on the Northwestern, Western and Southern sectors. Enemy losses were over 500 aircraft. Particularly effective were the operations of the air regiments from the 40th, 42d, 51st, 52d and 81st ADD Divisions. At the Orsha Airfield alone, crews from the 51st Division destroyed around 150 aircraft.(4)

At the beginning of November 1941, Hq SHC learned that the Nazi Command was planning massed raids against Moscow on the day of the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. In line with this, Gen P.F. Zhigarev received the task of conducting an air operation from 5 through 8 November in the aim of destroying enemy aviation at the airfields and thwarting the enemy's plan. Involved in this were the Air Forces of the Kalinin, Western and Bryansk Fronts, aviation units of the Moscow Military District and the 81st ADD Division (commander, Col A.Ye. Golovanov). Over a period of 3 days, they bombed 28 airfields and on 12 and 15 November another 19, destroying, respectively, 60 and 47 aircraft.(5) The barbarous plan of destroying Moscow from the air was checked.

As a total over the first 6 months of the war, the long-range bombers made 1,438 aircraft sorties in the course of which attacks were made against Nazi air bases. The raids were conducted chiefly at night. The main objectives to be destroyed or knocked out were aircraft at parking areas, hangars, fuel and ammunition dumps, headquarters, signals centers, command posts and runways as well as the quarters of flight and technical personnel. In darkness the effectiveness of counteractions by enemy antiaircraft artillery and fighters was reduced and as a result of this the losses of long-range

bombers was reduced. However, at the same time the organization and execution of the flight were substantially complicated as well as the detection of camouflaged enemy field airstrips. For this reason in preparing for the sortie, the pilots carefully studied the aerial photographs for characteristic markers, the position of parking areas, dumps, antiaircraft weapons and other airfield facilities. Moreover, several hours before the raid the command conducted a final reconnaissance of the targets. The planes conducting the final reconnaissance, in employing illuminating flares, established the presence and position of enemy aircraft at the airfields and radioed the data to the command post.

The bombers operated singly or in small groups (a flight or squadron). They approached the target from different altitudes and with a certain time interval relative to one another. For achieving surprise the run, whenever possible, was made from the direction of the territory occupied by the Nazi troops and at slow speed. In the absence of antiaircraft fire, bombing was made from an altitude of 400-500 m and this also made it possible to fire on the targets with machine guns. In the event of intense resistance from the antiaircraft artillery, the crews bombed from altitudes of 1,000-2,000 m, maneuvering in such a manner that three or four aircraft were in the airfield region simultaneously. This somewhat dispersed the fire of the ground antiaircraft weapons. For increasing the effectiveness of the strikes and for providing a greater time operating against the enemy, the pilots made three or five passes, remaining up to 10-15 minutes over the target. Sometimes flights were made by bombers in pairs. The first of these illuminated the airfield, created fires and neutralized the fire from the antiaircraft weapons and searchlights. The second dropped its bombload on the aircraft parking areas. High explosive, incendiary and fragmentation bombs were employed as weapons.

From the autumn of 1941, the ADD pilots began to employ such combat methods as blockading the enemy airfields. One of the first to begin doing this was the squadron commander from the 750th Bomber Air Regiment, Hero of the Soviet Union, Maj Ye.P. Federov. He flew his aircraft into the area of the assigned airfield, he waited until the Nazi bombers returned from their mission and covertly approached them. After turning on the ground searchlights, the crew released its bombs on the runway and parking areas and opened up machine gun fire against the aircraft on their landing approach. Panic broke out on the ground and in the air. Landing at the blockaded airfield and the taking off from it were excluded for a certain time. However, it was still impossible to achieve substantial results in destroying enemy aviation at the airfields. The basic reasons for this were the shortage of forces and the lack of experience among the commanders and staffs in organizing the raids as well as the strong air defenses of the strike objectives.

At the beginning of 1942, industry increased the production of the Il-4 aircraft. In the interests of an organizational strengthening, the individual ADD divisions in

March were formed into an operational field force directly under Hq SHC. Some 356 aircraft, 9 staffs of divisions, 20 regiments, 14 airfield service battalions, a navigators school, 2 head aviation dumps and a number of repair bodies were transferred from the Air Forces to the ADD.(6) As a result of the increase in the aircraft fleet, the opportunity arose for the massed employment of long-range bombers. Thus, during the first days of June 1942, the enemy had concentrated over 120 aircraft at the Bryansk Airfield and these aircraft were employed to attack the Soviet troops on the Moscow, Kharkov and Leningrad sectors. The ADD was given the mission of destroying the given air group. During the night of 14 June, 145 Il-4 bombed the airfield. The enemy losses were 37 bombers, 10 fighters and 150 men of the flight and technical personnel.(7)

In the autumn of 1942, the ADD formations were most active on the Stalingrad and Caucasus sectors. For example, at the end of September, air reconnaissance detected a large number (around 300) of Nazi aircraft based at the Armavir Airfield. As a result of a concentrated strike by several Il-4 groups during the night of the 26th, the enemy lost around 70 bombers.(8) In the preparations of the Soviet troops for the counteroffensive, the Air Forces Command conducted an air operation to destroy enemy aviation at the airfields drawing on the forces of the 8th Air Army and ADD formations in the aim "of weakening the enemy aviation and equalizing the ratio of air forces by the start of our troop counteroffensive." Over a period of 2 nights (on the 28th and 29th of October 1942), the 24th, 53d and 62d ADD Divisions, in cooperation with the 272d Night Bomber Air Division of the 8th Air Army, made 502 aircraft sorties and launched strikes at 8 airfields, destroying 20 aircraft.(9)

In 1942, the aviation industry and repair bodies delivered 650 aircraft for the ADD and this made it possible to man up the existing regiments as well as constitute new ones. The increase in the long-range bomber fleet influenced the bomber battle formations. They began sending out a weather scout ahead of each strike group (squadron). At the head of the battle formation was the squadron commander and it was his task to carry out final reconnaissance and illuminate the target; behind him was a crew duplicating his functions and then came the bomber group and the follow-up photographer.

The involvement of the ADD in attacking airfields during the first period of the Great Patriotic War played a definite role in the fight for air supremacy. Its pilots made over 7,500 aircraft sorties in carrying out this mission. However, due to the lack of forces, the long-range bombers operated predominantly in small groups. There was a desire to simultaneously attack all the detected airfields and this dispersed their efforts. The raids were hurriedly prepared, without conducting detailed reconnaissance and working out questions of cooperation. Proper attention was not paid to the neutralizing of air defense weapons and as a result of this the ADD suffered heavy losses.

In the second period, due to the combat experience gained by the command and the staffs and to the quantitative and qualitative growth of the aircraft fleet, the picture changed. Wave operations began to be combined with concentrated strikes. Clandestine and air reconnaissance began to be conducted intensely at the base areas as well as for the size and placement of enemy aviation at the airfields, the conditions of its combat activities and the air defense system.

Upon instructions of Hq SHC, the ADD formations in January-March 1943 conducted an independent air operation in the course of which attacks were made repeatedly against 19 airfields. For example, they made 3 raids against the Orsha Airfield, destroying 16 aircraft, 2 hangars, 37 motor vehicles and several ammunition dumps.(11) The air bases of Seshcha, Bryansk, Orel and Zaporozhye were bombed more than 10 times each.

In the spring of the same year, the 50th and 62d Air Divisions (a total of 200 aircraft) under the command of the deputy ADD commander, Gen N.S. Skripko, participated in an air operation which preceded the offensive of the Northern Caucasus Front in the aim of liberating the Taman Peninsula. The air operation was carried out by the forces of the 4th and 5th Air Armies of the Northern Caucasus Front, the 17th Air Army of the Southwestern Front, the 8th Air Army of the Southern Front and the Air Forces of the Black Sea Fleet. The basic mission was to weaken as much as possible the 4th Air Fleet of Nazi Germany the units of which were based at airfields in the Crimea, the Kuban and the Southern Ukraine, and win air supremacy by the start of the front's offensive. The plan envisaged the launching of attacks against 18 airfields where reconnaissance had discovered the largest accumulation of aircraft.

The air operation commenced on 20 April and lasted 8 days. The ADD crews operated at night against the airfields of Kerch, Bagerovo, Saki, Sarabuz, Stalino, Mariupol and Zaporozhye which were most distant from the front line (up to 300-350 km). Particularly effective were the bombings of the Crimean air bases of Saki and Sarabuz as here 100 and 70 enemy aircraft were destroyed and damaged, respectively. The total enemy losses on the ground over the period from 17 through 29 April were 260 aircraft.(11) This forced the Nazi Command to redeploy a significant portion of its aviation to airfields located in the deep rear and this had a positive effect on the air situation during the first days of the offensive by our troops in the area of Krymskaya Station.

On 30 April, the State Defense Committee [GKO] approved a decree for constituting 8 air corps in the ADD. The total number of aircraft in them was raised to 700 and by the end of the year had reached 1,047.(12) The aircraft fleet consisted of modernized Il-4, the bomber version of the Li-2 transports and a small number of TB-7 (Pe-8) heavy aircraft and the B-25 received from the Allies under Lend Lease.

Upon instructions of Hq SHC, the Air Forces Command from 8 through 10 June 1943 conducted an air operation in the aim of defeating the enemy attack air grouping raiding the important industrial centers of our nation such as Gorkiy, Yaroslavl and Saratov. The 1st, 2d and 15th Air Armies and the ADD formations participated in this, and they were given the mission of carrying out massed bombings against 15 enemy airfields where reconnaissance had detected the largest accumulation of aircraft. Over a period of 3 nights, the groups of Il-4 of varying size attacked the largest air bases of Orel, Bryansk, Seshcha and Karachev, where the Nazi Ju-88 and H3-111 bombers were based. During the night of 8 June, 102 crews bombed the airfield at Seshcha, 87 at Bryansk and 75 in Orel, making a total of 302 aircraft sorties. During the following 2 nights, the ADD in large forces raided these same objectives. By the efforts of the 3 air armies together, 168 aircraft were destroyed at the airfields.(13)

The ADD operations to defeat the enemy air groupings were marked by great scope, by decisiveness in achieving the set goals and by great effectiveness. They substantially undermined the battleworthiness of the Nazi German air forces and accelerated the winning of strategic air supremacy by the Soviet Air Forces. The long-range bomber crews in 1943 alone made 8,674 aircraft sorties in the aim of destroying enemy aviation at the airfields.(14) While during the first period wave operations of small-sized groups prevailed and concentrated strikes even by regimental forces were made sporadically, now there was a significant increase in the number of attacks made by divisions and even corps.

In order to successfully carry out a joint flight at night, the battle formations of these forces had to be changed. Thus, from the summer of 1943, the divisional battle formation began to consist of two waves and several follow-up groups. At the head was the combat support wave with one or two squadrons. This was divided into independent groups (weather scouts, guidance, target illumination, for neutralizing the ground air defenses and for blockading the fighter aviation airfields) with three-six aircraft in each. The attack wave consisted of regimental columns. Ahead of them at a certain time lead were the crews for visual observation of bomber operations and the bombing results. At the head, in the middle and at the tail of the regimental battle formation were aircraft equipped with aerial cameras.

The particular attention given to complete supervision was explained by the desire of the command to objectively assess crew operations and the results achieved by them, to strengthen flight discipline, to improve the combat skill of the aviators and to increase their personal responsibility for carrying out the set missions. In this regard, an ordered system of supervision was worked out and this provided for the following: the use of aerial photography; the conducting of sorties by the leadership (the commanders of the formations and units and their deputies) to the target area and trips of specially assigned

officers to the airfields which had been bombed and were subsequently captured by our advancing troops; the use of reports from the flight crews, written reports from the commanders of ground units and partisan detachments, evidence of prisoners and other information.

The most effective ways were to send out inspectors to the strike areas and provide aerial photography. In the first instance, the supervising crew reached the designated airfield some 3 or 4 minutes ahead of the attack wave and carried out its bombing against the already illuminated and designated target. Then it climbed, began to fly in a circle and visually observe the approaching aircraft. In having a procedural table which gave the order of the bombers in the battle formation, the inspector fixed on a previously prepared diagram of the airfield the time and point of impact of the bombs dropped by each of them. However, in making concentrated strikes with large forces, when the bombing was carried out simultaneously by several crews, it was virtually impossible to determine the individual results. Aircraft with photographic equipment were positioned in the attack waves and photographed the main stage of the flight from the start of the run to the target. The aerial photographs made it possible to confirm the carrying out of the set mission, to assess the general accuracy of the bombing and when necessary to ascertain the reasons for mistakes made. But in a majority of instances, the presence of bright light over the airfields from the powerful beams of ground searchlights and fires had a negative effect on their quality. For this reason for obtaining objective data on the results of the operations, the commanders endeavored to employ all forms of monitoring taken together.

The tactics of the long-range bombers also changed. Individual raids by groups made up of a squadron and a regiment could not substantially weaken the enemy air grouping and merely alarmed it. The enemy reinforced the cover of the airfields with antiaircraft weapons, it took measures to spread out and camouflage the aircraft, it changed the flight operations and so forth. As was already pointed out, the ADD command emphasized the launching of concentrated strikes against the airfields with the forces of divisions and corps. The battle formation of the former consisted of regimental columns and for the latter, of divisional columns. The high strike density was achieved by reducing the time distances between the bombers to 15-20 seconds by vertical separation.

Systematic raids forced the Nazis to employ a large amount of antiaircraft artillery and nighttime fighter interceptors for protecting the major air bases. In the arising situation, the ADD Command shifted its formations to operate against airfields located in another area. The enemy hurriedly began to shift additional air defense forces there. But after a certain time the long-range bombers resumed attacks against the previous objectives. The use of such tactics told positively on the results. In the first place, the enemy was forced to

constantly maneuver its air defense forces and these were not always able to promptly reach the new position. Secondly, a larger number of airfields was subjected to bombing and this increased the losses of Nazi aviation.

Blockading the airfields became widespread. This task was carried out by crews of three regiments of night "hunter" bombers organized in the II, IV and V Air Corps. They commenced their work, as a rule, several minutes before the attack waves flew over the front line. Here they blockaded the main airfields of the enemy bombers as well as the airfields of night fighters located close to the routes of flight of the formations. The use by the crews of bombs with fuses set for a varying delay (up to 30 minutes) virtually excluded the scrambling of the aircraft from the blockaded airfields. As a result, the effectiveness of the ADD strikes was substantially increased.

During the third period of the war, under conditions of unchallenged air supremacy for the Soviet Air Forces, the intensity of operations against enemy airfields declined somewhat. For example, in 1944, the long-range bomber formations made almost 2.5-fold fewer aircraft sorties for carrying out the given task than in 1943. The Nazi air grouping by that time was numerically inferior to ours but possessed a large number of airfields making it possible to disperse the air units. Under the existing situation, it was difficult to count on great effectiveness from the strikes and this was one of the reasons why in the third period only one independent air operation was conducted to destroy enemy aircraft on the ground. Before the start of the Belorussian Offensive Operation, eight ADD corps (1,007 bombers) over a period of 4 nights on 13, 14, 15 and 18 June 1944, launched massed raids against eight airfields where the basic portion (around 850 aircraft) of the Nazi 6th Air Fleet was located. The crews made a total of 1,472 aircraft sorties. Particularly intense raids were made against the air bases of Baranovichi (458 aircraft sorties), Belostok (163), Bobruysk (126), Luninets (118) and Brest (89).(15) The enemy lost a large number of aircraft and its air grouping on this sector of the front was significantly weakened.

At the same time, the attacks on airfields in the course of daily combat did not stop. However, these were launched only in those instances when the ADD Command had dependable information on the concentration of large Nazi aviation forces. This occurred, for example, on the southwestern sector in the autumn of 1944. Having received air reconnaissance data, formations from the III Guards Air Corps during the night of 14 and 15 September made two raids against the airfields of the Budapest Air Center, where around 200 aircraft were destroyed and damaged.(16)

Thus, during the years of the Great Patriotic War, the ADD made a major contribution to the winning of operational and strategic air supremacy by the Soviet Air Forces. This took an active part in combating the Nazi

air groupings and this was carried out in preparing for and in the course of the offensive and defensive operations of the fronts as well as during a period of operational lulls. Moreover, the long-range bomber formations participated in seven air operations. Five of these were conducted jointly with the air forces (air armies) of the fronts and two by their own forces.

The commander and staff of the Soviet Army Air Forces (the ADD commander and staff in the independent operations) were the immediate organizers of the air operations. In accord with the demands of the Hq SHC directives, they worked out the plans and instructions for all types of support, they issued these to the executors, they organized cooperation between the air field forces (formations), they supervised the carrying out of the battle tasks and reported on the results.

The air operations continued, as a rule, for several days and were conducted during the period of preparing strategic operations on axes, where the main groupings of the Nazi Army had deployed. This substantially made it easier for the Soviet Air Forces to win operational air supremacy by the start of active operations of the ground troops. In certain instances they were aimed at thwarting massed raids being prepared by the Nazi Command. Surprise in the launching of the first strike by the air formations was achieved by the strictest observance of camouflage measures in the course of organizing it. At the same time, the efforts of all types of reconnaissance were focused on discovering the main airfields, the air defense system and the operations of the enemy air units.

Enemy aviation came under attack along a broad front (from 300 to 1,200 km) and to a great depth (to 250-300 km), that is, the strikes against the airfields were made in its entire base area. Aircraft in parking areas, control towers, air defense weapons, various types of dumps and other facilities were destroyed. The destruction and mining of the runways halted airfield operations for a period from several hours to a day. Simultaneous raids against all airfield centers of a strategic sector prevented the Nazi Command from maneuvering the squadrons and made it difficult for them to avoid the strike and organize retaliatory actions. In the course of the bombings, the enemy lost flight and technical personnel as well as their training and replacement from the summer of 1943 involved great difficulties. The effective result of the massed raids was not only the defeat (weakening) of the Nazi air groupings but also the forced relocating of the latter to airfields more distant from the front line. During the war years, the long-range bomber crews made 20,697 aircraft sorties to carry out this mission (9.6 percent of their total number).(17)

Experience shows that with good organization the strikes against the airfields were marked by great effectiveness. There was an average of five aircraft sorties to destroy one aircraft on the ground (this was 5-or 6-fold less than in air combat).(18) The insufficiently wide employment of the given method of fighting for air supremacy can be

explained by the following factors. Due to the situation developing on the Soviet-German Front, the operations of the ADD formations were basically concentrated on destroying enemy troops and combat equipment on the battlefield, reserves in the rear, disrupting rail lines and so forth. Daylight raids without a proper cover (long-range escort fighters such as the Yak-9DD appeared only in 1944) against airfields defended by a significant number of anti-aircraft weapons entailed great losses. For this reason the command was forced to employ the long-range bombers only at night.

For achieving effective results of the strikes under night-time conditions, a range of support measures had to be carried out (reconnaissance of the airfields, organizing of cooperation between the attack waves and the support waves, the neutralizing of the air defense weapons on the routes of flight and in the target areas and so forth). There was not always enough time and forces for this. Moreover, the absence of advanced sight and navigation equipment on the bombers made it substantially more difficult to reach the objectives and execute the bombing. Even insignificant miscalculations made in the course of the preparations reduced the effectiveness of the massed raids against the enemy airfields and led to unjustified losses.

The combat experience of the involvement of the long-range aviation in defeating (weakening) the enemy air groupings has not lost its importance under present-day conditions. It shows that for successfully carrying out this mission, it is advisable:

1) To employ various forms and methods of combat as well as methods of executing the bomb strikes which best conform to the ground, air and meteorological situation, completely excluding any routine here in action;

2) Widely conduct air operations both together with the air forces (air armies) of the fronts as well as independently, making it possible to alter the balance of forces quickly; in the aim of continuous actions against the enemy the raids should be made during the day and at night;

3) Attacks against the airfield should be launched simultaneously along the entire enemy aviation base area in order to prevent the enemy from quickly replenishing losses by maneuvering the air units from different sectors; in areas with a weakly developed airfield network (for example, in mountain terrain), the main effort should be concentrated on knocking out the runways along with destroying the aircraft;

4) During the period of planning the combat operations and preparing for them air reconnaissance must be conducted systematically and effectively, as only with the availability of complete and reliable information on the opposing air grouping (strength, basing, position of the parking areas, staffs, control towers, dumps, the

anti-aircraft weapon positions and so forth) is it possible to correctly assign the primary objectives of the strike and the time for launching the attacks;

5) In conducting independent air operations, particular attention must be given to preparing and carrying out the first massed strike, employing in it a larger portion of the available forces and organizing and providing complete support for the combat operations of the aviation units (this applies primarily to covering the battle formations with fighter aviation as well as neutralizing the anti-aircraft weapons in the zone of flight and in the target area);

6) Training the bomber crews to conduct defensive combat against enemy fighters, to employ creatively the existing tactical procedures and search constantly for new types of maneuvers helping to effectively overcome the resistance of various air defense weapons;

7) Improve the organization of cooperation between the attack waves and all support groups, to work for its precise and continuous realization in all stages of the combat flight; to control the aviation units on a strictly centralized basis, as it is possible to count on the high effectiveness of the strikes against the enemy aviation base areas only under the condition of the massed employment of the forces assigned for this according to a uniform concept and plan.

Footnotes

1. Until March 1942, the long-range bomber aviation, from March 1942, the long-range aviation and from December 1944, the 18th Air Army. In the article it is called the long-range aviation.

2. A.D. Tsykin, "Ot 'Ili Muromtsa' do raketonostsa" [From the "Ilya Muromets" to a Missile-Carrying Aircraft], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, p 110.

3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 226, inv. 2139, file 12, sheet 15.

4. Ibid., folio 35, inv. 11290, file 146, sheet 9.

5. Ibid., inv. 30802, file 8, sheet 26, 27; folio 346, inv. 52133, file 1, sheets 212-219.

6. A.D. Tsykin, op. cit., p 151.

7. TsAMO, folio 39, inv. 252, file 12, sheet 53.

8. A.D. Tsykin, op. cit., p 112.

9. TsAMO, folio 346, inv. 5755, file 11, sheet 424.

10. A.D. Tsykin, op. cit., p 113.

11. M.N. Kozhevnikov, "Komandovaniye i shtab VVS Sovetskoy Armii v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Nauka, 1985, p 120.

12. Ibid., p 115.

13. N.S. Skripko, "Po tselyam blizhnim i dainim" [Against Targets Near and Far], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, pp 286, 287.

14. A.D. Tsykin, op. cit., p 114.

15. I.V. Timokhovich, "Operativnoye iskusstva Sovetskikh VVS v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Operational Art of the Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 84.

16. "Sovetskiye Voenno-Vozdushnyye Sily v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [The Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 334.

17. TsAMO, folio 5874, inv. 36316, file 42, sheet 10.

18. I.V. Timokhovich, op. cit., p 93.

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Cooperation of Combat Arms in Offensive Battle
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[Article by Maj S.P. Ivanov: "On Cooperation of Combat Arms in Offensive Battle"]

[Text] A most important condition for achieving success in combined-arms battle is cooperation between the combat arms. Even the 1929 Red Army Field Manual emphasized that for defeating the enemy it was not enough to merely concentrate "superior forces," but also there should be cooperation of the combat arms to the entire depth of combat. The 1936 RKKA Provisional Field Manual stated that each combat arm should be employed in close cooperation with the other combat arms under the conditions of the best employment of all its capabilities. This notion was further developed in the 1939 Field Manual (PU-39). In it cooperation was defined as the crucial condition for achieving success and was provided by detailed cooperation of the various combat arms in terms of tasks, lines (objectives) and time.

During the first period of the Great Patriotic War, due to the shortcomings in the training of the command personnel during the prewar years, the commanders and

staffs did not always successfully manage the organization and maintaining of troop cooperation. This in a particularly negative manner was influenced by the poor knowledge on the part of the combined-arms commanders of the combat capabilities of the artillery, tanks, aviation, engineer troops and the methods of their combat employment.

In generalizing the experience of the first months of the war, Hq SHC in its directive (September 1941) pointed out: "...In a number of instances the failure of our offensive fighting and operations has been the direct consequence of their poor organization and preparation.

"Decisions are taken on the map without preliminary reconnaissance of the enemy and the field. Cooperation of the combat arms is organized hurriedly and also without considering the terrain conditions and their influence upon the employment of the combat arms in battle."(1)

The commanders of the fronts and armies also drew attention to such shortcomings. Thus, the Commander of the Leningrad Front, Lt Gen M.S. Khozin considered one of the reasons for the failure of the first operation to breach the Leningrad Blockade in the winter of 1941-1942 was the absence of proper cooperation. "...Cooperation within the subunits, units and formations between the infantry, artillery and tanks," he wrote, "was not organized."(2) The order of the commander of the 20th Army (January 1942) pointed out that certain formation and unit commanders still poorly organized battle: before the offensive they did not always conduct careful reconnaissance; cooperation was not worked out in the field; the infantry did not know the tasks of the artillery and the artillery troops did not know where the infantry would be operating.(3)

The theory and practice of cooperation among the combat arms were significantly enriched with the start of the decisive going over of the Soviet Army to the offensive. The new provisions on the coordinated employment of troops in battle and an operation were reflected in the draft of the 1943 Field Manual (PU-43). The manual defined combat as primarily the combat of united combat arms which involved diverse combat equipment on a mass basis: artillery of all types, mortars, tanks and aviation, and in this context demanded strictly organized cooperation of all combat arms in battle, since success could be achieved only by their united efforts. The introduction of the Manual stated: "The command personnel of all levels and all combat arms should be fully aware of the unconditional necessity for continuous cooperation in battle and in practice master the procedures for organizing this."

Each combat arm, as combat experience was to show, was employed on the basis of the skillful use of all its properties and capabilities. Strikes by the infantry, artillery, tanks and aviation, even if they were strong, by themselves could not bring about the desired result. The

optimum combination of various forces in combat made it possible to make maximum use of the specific combat capabilities of each combat arms and to mutually compensate for the presence of vulnerable places in some by the high effectiveness of others.

The combined arms commander was the organizer of cooperation. Article 211 of the 1943 Draft Field Manual emphasized that the army and formation commanders, with the participation of their staffs, the chiefs of the combat arms and unit commanders, should clearly determine who should cooperate with whom, when and for what. In following the requirements of the manual, the commander indicated the task and the front of advance for each unit; he established the sequence of executing the tasks by each combat arm; together with the commanders of the infantry, artillery, tank, engineer and aviation units (subunits), in the field he clarified the directions and objectives for the infantry and tanks; he set the targets to be hit and destroyed by the artillery and aviation and the sectors where smokescreens were to be set up; he indicated the forming-up places for the infantry assault, and the lines for the regrouping of the artillery command; he set the forming-up places and assembly areas for the tanks, he organized observation of their actions and help in crossing obstacles and neutralizing antitank artillery; he determined the procedure and methods of communications between the infantry, artillery, tanks and aviation in terms of stages of combat and lines; he established signals and personally checked how correctly the task had been understood and the signals mastered; he constantly kept aviation informed on the situation and ensured its overflight across the front, he established the procedure for designating the forward line of the front which the infantry was advancing to. Correctly organized cooperation was cooperation where each combat arm was used most effectively in full accord with its combat capabilities.

During the first period of the Great Patriotic War, the superior headquarters bodies often "ate up" the time of subordinates and this put the latter in a difficult position. This shortcoming was eliminated by the demands of the 1943 Draft Field Manual. Article 212 stated: "The commanders and staffs of the combined-arms formations, in planning cooperation work, should give the battalion commander at least 3 hours of daylight for work in the field and for detailed organization of cooperation with the commanders of the attached and supporting artillery, tank, mortar and engineer units as well as the chemical defense subunits."

The manual defined the duties of the commanders in organizing cooperation. In particular, these included: to know the tasks, directions and objectives of those units with which there was to be cooperation, to coordinate with them in the field one's actions in terms of target, place and time; to set up mutual observation, communications and target designation procedures and explain the conditional signals; have an over-all orientation scheme and a uniform numbering of the targets; to

coordinate one's actions with the supporting aviation; to know the position of the battle formations of adjacent units and their tasks, to organize continuous reciprocal support in the course of battle, particularly in the assault, in committing the reserves of the division (brigade) to battle and in repelling enemy counterattacks; to clarify the procedure for the regrouping of artillery command and the tank assembly areas.

The draft manual recommended the organizing of dependable communications. The combined-arms (infantry) and artillery command and observation posts should be located together whenever possible and when they were located separately dependable communications was to be established between them by radio and telephone. The staffs were entrusted with the working out of a timing coordination table.

A characteristic feature in the organizing of cooperation on the offensive was its ongoing greater complexity. This was explained, for example, by the fact that a rifle regiment and a tank (mechanized) brigade received evermore reinforcements. A rifle regiment had nine or ten TOE combat subunits. Moreover, it was given as reinforcements 10-15 subunits of the various combat arms and as a consequence of this in the operations of 1944-1945, a regimental commander had to organize cooperation between numerous subunits of different combat arms and special troops.

While in the counteroffensive at Stalingrad in November of 1942, the 622d Rifle Regiment from the 124th Rifle Division received only one mortar battery as reinforcements and was supported by one artillery regiment and a mortar battalion, in the Belorussian Operation in June 1944, the 61st Guards Rifle Regiment of the 19th Guards Rifle Division was reinforced by a tank battalion, by two companies of minesweeping tanks, by an artillery regiment and two artillery batteries.(4)

Cooperation of the combat arms was carried out comprehensively with the observance of its general principles. The execution of a battle task was achieved by the united and clearly coordinated efforts of the infantry, artillery, tanks, combat engineers and aviation and had its own particular features stemming from the nature of the combat employment of one or another combat arms.

Cooperation of the infantry with artillery. During the first period of the war, due to the lack of combat experience, the combined-arms commanders did not pay sufficient attention to the artillery and this was one of the reasons for the failure of an offensive. In this context an order was issued by the people's commissar of defense of 25 October 1941. This, in particular, pointed out that "many combined-arms commanders have a poor knowledge of the combat capabilities of the artillery, they do not set battle tasks for it and they often incorrectly employ this powerful combat arms in combat. Without knowing how to correctly employ artillery in one or

another type of combat, naturally they also cannot demand correct combat employment of the artillery from their subordinate commanders."(5)

The Red Army Infantry Combat Manual published at the end of 1942 played an important role in improving the questions of cooperation. This emphasized that the battalion and regimental commander must personally organize cooperation in the field, both within the battalion and commander as well as with the assigned and supporting forces.

Before taking a decision, a combined-arms commander, as a rule, listened to the artillery commander and together with him worked out in detail all the questions of fire damage to the enemy and with the start of the offensive direct contact was maintained between them. This provided an opportunity to respond promptly to changes in the situation.

Great importance was given to the joint work of the commanders of the rifle and artillery subunits. Together they studied the nature of the enemy defenses, the configuration of the forward edge, the position of the strongpoints, boundaries and flanks, and intervals, they designated the targets which should be hit by the artillery during the period of preparatory fire and fire support for the assault. They determined the tasks for the final reconnaissance of the enemy antitank weapons on the forward edge and in the near depth. They set general markers which provided an opportunity to set tasks quickly and clearly in a battle situation and to report on its changes. In order to avoid hitting the attacking subunits with their own shells, a troop safety line was set in the field.

Artillery softening up preceded the going over to the offensive. The combined-arms commanders personally observed its course and took measures to ensure dependable suppression and destruction of the targets in the zone of the advance. Observation was conducted not only from the results of fire but also for the enemy. Just how important this was can be seen from the combat example of the 61st Guards Rifle Regiment of the 19th Guards Rifle Division in the Belorussian Operation in June 1944. During the artillery softening up, the commander of a rifle battalion observed that the enemy 30 minutes before the end of the fire had begun to pull back from the first trench. This was immediately reported. With permission from the senior commander, the fire on this sector was shifted in depth and through the fire corridor formed, the battalion, having an assault force mounted on tanks ahead, quickly broke through in depth and without a pause captured a crossing on the Luchesa River which was 2.5 km in the Nazi rear. This ensured the crossing of the regiment's main forces and the high rate of advance.(6)

A good deal of attention, as combat experience shows, was given to coordinating the actions of the infantry and artillery during the period of the false shifting of fire in

the aim of deceiving the enemy. Thus, in conducting artillery softening up before the assault by units of the 3d Guards Rifle Division on the Perekop Isthmus in April 1944, the schedule provided for two false shiftings of fire from the forward edge to the second trench and involving 50 percent of the artillery. During the false shiftings of artillery and mortar fire to the second enemy trench, our infantry with shouts of "Hurrah!" by putting up prepared dummies and firing their small arms, simulated the start of an assault. At this time the artillery (50 percent of the total number) fell silent ready to unleash its fire against the enemy personnel getting ready in the first trench to repel our assault.(7)

In the course of an offensive, dependable cooperation was achieved by the correct determining of the location of the command-observation posts [KNP] and the procedure for moving them. The artillery troops carried out their tasks better when their KNP was located close to or directly with the KNP of the rifle subunit commanders. This was particularly important at night and under conditions of limited visibility when the artillery troops had to provide not only accurate fire but also the setting of light markers (lines) on the main axes. The artillery, thus, cleared the path for the infantry while the infantry, "in sticking close to the artillery fire," reinforced its results.

Cooperation of the infantry with tanks. Its poor organization and at times complete absence in the offensive battles during the first months of the war were the reason for the failures.

On 1-5 September 1941, on one of the sectors of the Western Front, the 1st Tank Division and the 127th Tank Brigade suffered tank losses (up to 70 percent of the total number). An analysis of the reasons for such substantial losses showed that the enemy defenses had been heavily saturated with antitank weapons and at the same time cooperation between the tanks, artillery and infantry had been poorly organized. The infantry did not take advantage of the success of the tank assault and did not support it with the fire of the rifle units. The command posts of the regimental and divisional commanders were so far away from the forward edge that they could not control the units.(8) On the Northwestern Front, the 116th Separate Tank Battalion which was part of the 27th Army was split between the 28th Tank Division and the 23d Rifle Division. As a result of the poor organization of cooperation and an ignorance of the capabilities of the given type of vehicle on the part of the rifle unit commanders (the KhT-26 armed with a machine gun was sent into the assault without infantry), after a day of fighting, only 5 out of 31 tanks remained.(9)

The tank troops were frequently given a task for independent operations in depth a distance away from the infantry. The directive from the commander of the 5th Army, Lt Gen I.I. Fedyuninskiy of 28 August 1942 stated: "The commanders of units with which the tanks

are operating feel that the tank units and subunits assigned to them are obliged to support them and demand one thing from the tanks: 'the tanks should blaze the trail for the infantry' (the 3d Guards Motorized Rifle Division), and if the tanks have not advanced, the entire blame for the nonexecution of the task rests on the tank commander. The tanks work for the infantry and with them, but without close cooperation, mutual understanding of the tasks and help for one another it is impossible to carry out the battle tasks." (10) Often the crews of disabled vehicles withdrawn from battle were given the task of re-entering it. All of this led to useless sacrifices and the infantry remained generally without support.

The Draft of the Red Army Field Manual (PU-43) clearly defined the procedure for the advance of the infantry and tanks. Article 221 of this manual emphasized that the tanks, in operating jointly with the infantry, have the main task of destroying enemy infantry and should not move more than 200-400 m away from their infantry. In combat a tank commander should organize the observance of the infantry battle formations. If the infantry has hit the dirt and is not advancing behind the vehicles, the commander of the tank unit should assign tanks to destroy the firing positions obstructing the forward movement of our infantry.

The dependability of cooperation is established even in preparing for the offensive. In working together in the field, the commanders should study it carefully and ascertain: "a) The enemy's position including the forward edge of its defenses in terms of the local features, the positions of machine guns, antitank guns, mortar and artillery batteries, the presence and position of minefields, antitank traps and other obstacles; b) the position of our infantry, the axis of its advance and the time of attack, the position of the infantry at the forming-up place for the assault.... The immediate and subsequent tasks of the infantry which the tanks will support...." (11) The success of cooperation is also determined by the teamwork of the rifle and tank subunits. Practice exercises were conducted on terrain close to that where they would be fighting. Special attention here was given to cooperation between the infantry and the close support tanks and to have the tanks roll over assault troops, if they were to be employed.

Cooperation of the tanks with artillery consisted primarily in the coordinated fire damage to the enemy. The essence of this cooperation was defined by the Order No. 325 of the People's Commissar of Defense. This document stated: "The artillery before the tanks go into the attack should destroy the antitank weapons of the enemy defenses. During the period of the assault on the forward edge and the fighting deep in the enemy defenses, from the signals of the tank commanders the artillery should neutralize the weapons impeding the advance of the tanks.... With the appearance of enemy tanks on the battlefield, the artillery will conduct the basic battle

against them. The tanks will fight the enemy tanks only in the instance of an obvious superiority in forces and an advantageous position." (12)

In organizing cooperation the commander of a tank unit together with the artillery commanders established what firing positions were to be hit during the artillery softening-up, where fire was to be shifted during the tank assault on the forward edge, to escort the tank assault with firing at which areas and lines and from what directions to prevent counterattacks by enemy combat vehicles. (13) Antitank weapons were primarily the targets for the artillery.

For continuous cooperation and for increasing its effectiveness, at the artillery observation posts there were tank commanders. These watched the advance of the tanks and were ready at any time to call in artillery fire on the required sectors and against objectives newly detected in the process of the assault. In turn, the forward artillery spotters and often the artillery commanders with radios were carried in the combat vehicles of the brigade and battalion commanders. They called in fire and correct it.

Cooperation of infantry and tanks with aviation. The lack of proper contact between the combined-arms and air staffs at the outset of the war led to a situation where uniform cooperation documents were not worked out. The men poorly distinguished the silhouettes of friendly aircraft, they did not understand their identifying signals and markings and did not know the time, direction and altitude of aviation's overflight over the front line. Due to the lack of a sufficient amount of light signal equipment the troops unclearly marked their forward edge and did not provide target designation for aviation.

The practice of cooperation underwent significant development in the second and third periods of the war. New provisions for coordinating actions were reflected in the draft of the 1943 Red Army Field Manual (PU-43). Article 214 of the draft of this manual demanded that the air commanders know the situation and constantly monitor the course of actions of the ground troops, know the battle formations and tasks of the infantry, artillery and tanks, and together with the combined-arms commanders clarify the objectives, the time and signals for air attack, set the direction and altitude for flying over the front, the marking of their aircraft and the forward tank and infantry units, maintain constant contact with the commander of the combined-arms formation and have his own responsible representatives at the combined-arms command posts.

In the aim of dependable cooperation, the combined-arms commanders were required to have a knowledge of air tactics and an ability to distinguish our own aircraft

from enemy ones. For this reason exercises were conducted in the units and subunits on studying and identifying their silhouettes, and special teams were organized for giving aviation identification and target designation signals.

Coordination in actions was achieved due to a knowledge of the common battle tasks by the combined-arms and air commanders as well as due to personal agreement on the methods for carrying them out. For this purpose they organized exercises in a terrain mock-up, and agreed upon the questions of who would cooperate with whom, to what degree and in what period of combat and specifically how this was to be expressed.

Reciprocal target designation was carried out by various means. The artillery troops, for example, set up checkpoints over the objective to be struck by aviation and fired with tracer ammunition. The pilots also designated targets for the ground troops by firing on these targets.

In order to ensure dependable cooperation officers from the air division staffs with communications were frequently sent to the command posts of the formation commanders, while air spotters would be in the battle formations of the forward units. Such a form of cooperation produced high results. Units of the LXXX Rifle Corps (Berlin Operation) on 16 April 1945 came under heavy artillery shelling in the Didersdorf area and were forced to hit the dirt. A representative from the 198th Ground Attack Air Division who was at the corps command post immediately called in by radio the patrolling aircraft groups. Due to the active operations of the attack planes, the enemy fire was neutralized and our troops resumed the offensive.(14)

It was possible to exclude air strikes against our own troops if the forward edge was clearly marked. In addition to tarps for these purpose they widely used pyrotechnic devices (rockets and smokescreens) as well as the firing of tracer bullets.

The organizing and maintaining of continuous cooperation in offensive combat were one of the main functional duties for the commanders of the formations, units and subunits. In uniting the combat efforts of the combat arms, the commanders endeavored to make up for the weak points and shortages of certain forces by the strongpoints and advantages of others, thereby ensuring the achieving of better results with fewer losses in men and equipment.

Cooperation among the combat arms, as a principle of military art and a most important condition for achieving victory on the battlefield, has maintained its importance under present-day conditions. Its organization and maintaining in the course of combat have been clearly set out in the field manuals and regulations. Combat experience also provides great help in mastering this art. To know this and employ it creatively in tactical exercises is an urgent task for us.

Footnotes

1. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents From the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 5, 1947, p 6.
2. *Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal*, No 2, 1966, pp 45, 46.
3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 343, inv. 1, file 21, sheet 34.
4. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Polk" [Tactics in Combat Examples. The Regiment], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 72, 73.
5. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", Moscow, Voenizdat, No 52, 1950, p 27.
6. TsAMO, folio 1088, inv. 1, file 8a, sheet 2.
7. See: "Nastupatelnyy boy strelkovoy divizii" [Offensive Combat of a Rifle Division], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1949, p 71.
8. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", Moscow, Voenizdat, No 21, 1954, p 15.
9. *Ibid.*, pp 17-18.
10. *Ibid.*, p 60.
11. *Ibid.*, p 87.
12. *Ibid.*, p 63.
13. *Ibid.*, p 13.
14. "Sovetskiye Voenno-Vozdusnyye Sily v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 395.

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Influence of Experience of Great Patriotic War on Certain Questions in Organizational Development of Armed Forces

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[Article by Lt Gen (Ret) A.I. Yevseyev, candidate of military sciences: "The Influence of the Experience of the Great Patriotic War on Certain Questions in the Organizational Development of the Armed Forces"]

[Text] The Soviet Army in bearing the basic burden of combating the main forces of the aggressor, gained rich and diverse combat experience which was and remains an inexhaustible source and a valuable material essential for the further development of Soviet theory and practice. It has had and continues to have a significant impact on the carrying out of the most important questions in the postwar organizational development of the Army and Navy.

The Great Patriotic War confirmed the correctness and vitality of the principle adopted in our nation of the professional organizational development of the Armed Forces. Combat practice was to show that the task of dependably protecting the nation could be carried out successfully only by a regular professional army which was kept in constant combat readiness and capable, when necessary, in a short period of time of deploying to a strength ensuring the decisive rebuff of aggression.

The designated thesis is of important significance now. Under the conditions of the unabating aggressiveness of the reactionary imperialist circles, there is an urgent need in peacetime for maintaining the Armed Forces in a state ready to immediately undertake response actions corresponding to the nature and scope of the arising military threat. They should be armed with weapons and equipment and trained to fight in the most complex situation. This is determined by the fact that the limited time which the Army and Navy will possess for initiating decisive military operations to repel aggression as well as the possibility of extensive destruction at the very outset of the war can greatly impede the carrying out of broad mobilizational measures.

The last war fully confirmed also the correctness of the **manning system for the Armed Forces in accord with the Law Governing Universal Military Service** which had been adopted in the nation in the prewar period. Combat experience was to show that such a system best ensured the training of the necessary amount of trained reserves the presence of which made it possible to quickly deploy the troops (naval forces) in the event of the declaration of mobilization and with the start of hostilities to promptly reinforce the operational army. Thus, in the course of the Great Patriotic War within a maximum short time (from 23 through 30 June 1941) some 5.3 million persons liable for military service were inducted into the Armed Forces

and an additional 98 formations constituted. For replacing the losses and for reinforcing the operational army by 1 December 1941, some 291 divisions and 94 brigades had been sent to the front.(1) It must be considered that under the conditions of the increased destructive force of modern weapons it will be significantly more difficult to restore the battleworthiness of the units and formations than was the case in the last war. In this context the importance of reserves has increased even more.

The experience of the last war also had a strong impact on the **further improvement in the organizational structure of the Armed Forces**. Confirmed were the theses of Soviet military science which pointed out that a victory can be achieved only by the united efforts of all the Armed Services each of which is capable independently and in cooperation with the others to carry out a broad range of tasks entrusted to it. Here the role and proportional amount of each of these did not remain constant during the war but rather depended upon the increase in the military economic base, scientific and technical development as well as changes in the nature and content of the tasks being carried out. For example, during the various period of the war, the Ground Troops comprised 80-87.2 percent of the total number of the Armed Forces, the Air Forces were 6.2-8.7 percent, the Navy 4.5-7.3 percent and the National Air Defense Troops 3.3-4.8 percent.(2)

Undoubtedly, the improvement in the weapons and the means of delivering them to targets in the postwar period could not help but substantially influence the development of the Armed Services and combat arms (naval forces) as well as the determining of their role and proportional amount. However, the general trend set in the course of the last war continues to prevail. For example, regardless of the fact that the proportional amount of Ground Troops in the postwar period has declined somewhat, they remain the most numerous Armed Service. The organizational forms of the units and formations have continued to improve in a direction of further increasing their strike force, increasing their independence in carrying out battle tasks, ensuring high maneuverability on the battlefield and reducing vulnerability to enemy weapons. Indicative is the influence of the experience of the Great Patriotic War on the development of the tank troops. The employment of large tank formations and field forces in the operations made it possible to quickly breach the enemy defenses, to successfully encircle and defeat the enemy groupings, to conduct pursuit at a rapid pace and develop the offensive to a great depth. The proportional amount of tanks in the war increased from 4.4 to 11.5 percent.(3) Considering this the tank troops, in possessing powerful fire, maneuverability and dependable armor protection, under present-day conditions are developing as the main strike force of the Ground Troops.

The war also confirmed the positive significance of motorizing all the combat arms. This trend has undergone further development in the postwar period. The

necessity of quickly employing the results of the use of nuclear weapons and other modern weapons has placed even higher demands on the mobility of the units and formations. In this context the rifle troops have become motorized rifle. They are now armed with armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles and due to these it has become possible to fight and maneuver at a rapid pace.

Under the conditions of the sharply increased fire power, the role of cavalry gradually declined in carrying out battle tasks. In the Armed Forces its proportional amount by the end of the war had declined from 4.8 percent to 3.0 percent. Considering this, in the postwar period the cavalry as a combat arms has not undergone further development and was finally abolished in 1955.(4)

In the course of the war, an urgent need appeared for the massed employment of aviation on the crucial axes and, consequently, for an increased number of Air Forces. This trend has remained also in the postwar period. Along with the technical rearming, there has been a continuous rise in the proportional amount of aviation in the Armed Forces.

Combat experience showed that the defense of a state was inconceivable without dependable defense of the troops and rear facilities against enemy air attack. The National Air Defense Troops, in going through a number of stages in their development, acquired the traits of an independent Armed Service. In the course of the war air defense formations and field forces were organized with an independent centralized headquarters system and this significantly increased the maneuverability and effectiveness of their actions.

With a further increase and improvement under present-day conditions in the means of air attack in the armies of the foreign states and with the appearance of nuclear missile weapons in the United States and other NATO countries, the role and importance of air defense have increased even more. There is a sharply greater need for dependable air cover not only for the groupings of the Armed Forces but also for the main political-administrative and economic centers. In considering the exceptional importance of these tasks, the CPSU and the Soviet government in 1948 took a decision to convert the Air Defense Troops into an independent Armed Service.

Proceeding from the war's experience, the development of the organizational forms of the Navy during the first postwar years basically was carried out by establishing squadrons of surface ships which were designed chiefly for combat operations on the maritime sectors in cooperation with the ground troops in the interests of achieving the goals of the front-level operations. Subsequently, in line with the change in the material base of the fleet and the tasks assigned to it, there was a transition to the building of a nuclear-powered submarine fleet and the

establishing of formations capable of carrying out strategic tasks of hitting enemy objectives both at sea and on land. The delivery of modern fighting ships, aircraft and other equipment necessitated a further improvement in the organizational structure of the Navy formations and forces as well as in their command.

Combat practice also had a significant impact on the postwar development of the special troops, particularly engineer, signals, radio technical and so forth. At present, they have a modern organization and technical equipping making it possible for them to successfully carry out their tasks in the course of various combat operations.

During the war a new type of weapon, rocket artillery, was born and underwent significant development. The experience of its organization and combat employment was widely employed in establishing the Strategic Rocket Troops. Due to their high combat capabilities, they have become the main Armed Service, the basis of the combat might of the Armed Forces as well as a decisive means for achieving the set goals.

The establishing during the last war of the High Commands of the Sectors was a definite contribution to the practice of resolving organizational problems. In a number of instances their presence on the Soviet-German Front and particularly in the Far East played a positive role and showed the advisability of posing the question of establishing intermediate elements of strategic leadership on the major axes when necessary.

The war persuasively showed that one of the main indicators for the combat might of the Armed Forces and the ability to successfully carry out battle tasks was their **technical equipping**. Hence, the saturating of the troops with weapons and military equipment has constantly risen. While at the start of December 1941, the Soviet Army on the Soviet-German Front was armed with 22,000 guns and mortars, 1,954 tanks and 2,238 combat aircraft, by 1 January 1945, in the Operational Army, in the Reserve of Hq SHC and on the frontier there were over 144,200 guns and mortars, 15,700 tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount] and 22,600 combat aircraft.(5)

Along with the increased quantity of weapons and military equipment, the nature of armed combat was substantially influenced by their quality state. Suffice it to point to the fact that over 80 percent of the weapons of the Soviet Army had been modernized by the war's end.(6) The development and use of new, more advanced types of weapons made it possible to boost the fire and strike power of the troop formations and carry out difficult battle tasks in a shorter time.

The drive to achieve advantages in the quantity and quality of weapons and combat equipment led to a situation where over the entire length of the war there

was an intense struggle in this area between the belligerents. Due to the superiority of the socialist economy, to the effective military-technical policy of the CPSU and the Soviet government as well as to the heroic labor of our people, the military equipment of the Soviet Armed Forces during the war years ended up better.

In the postwar period, the changes in the technical equipping of the armies of a majority of states have been marked by even greater scope than in the years of the last war. The military-industrial complexes of the imperialist states, primarily the United States, having initiated an arms race, have continued to constantly boost the output of new types and models of weapons, having used scientific and technical progress in the aims of achieving military superiority over the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact countries.

The USSR was confronted with the necessity of taking measures in response. Here our nation has never been the initiator in developing new types of weapons and has not endeavored to achieve superiority either in nuclear or conventional weapons. At the same time the Soviet Union, in considering the war's experience, could not allow any lag in the arming of its Armed Forces. The high degree of economic development and the wide use of scientific achievements made it possible to establish a modern military-industrial basis which would provide dependable security for our nation and our allies. Subsequently, "the USSR will make every effort so that the USSR Armed Forces are on a level excluding the military superiority of the imperialist forces...."(7)

The experience of the last war is of inestimable importance for solving the problems of organizing combat and operational training. As is known, the training of commanders, staffs and personnel during the war years was totally subordinate to ensuring the successful carrying out of the tasks confronting the troops. This was marked by purposefulness and concreteness. In field exercises, in flights and cruises and in a situation as close as possible to actual combat, the personnel worked out and developed skills for the able employment of the weapons and equipment. Physical endurance, the ability to overcome any hardships, initiative and confidence in one's forces were also produced. Particular attention was paid to tactical skills.

This experience was the basis for the combat and operational training in the postwar period. It has completely kept its pertinence under present-day conditions, certainly considering the increased demands on the skills, the ideological and psychological conditioning of the personnel. As in the war years, as before the main requirements are: to teach the troops what is essential in a war and to prepare them to fight against a strong enemy, at full force and making maximum use of the fire and maneuvering capabilities of the modern weapons and equipment.

The war hardened the demands on all the command and political personnel of the Army and Navy, having convincingly shown that the success of a battle or operation depends largely upon the level of theoretical training, practical skills, the competence of command personnel and their high sense of responsibility for the condition of the troops and the carrying out of the tasks confronting them.

At the present stage in the organizational development of the Armed Forces, these demands have assumed even greater importance. The party assigns a particular role to military personnel in increasing the combat capability and readiness of the troops. The question of improving their political and professional training has been posed acutely as well as the strengthening of ideological and moral tempering, the greater responsibility for the assigned job and the necessity of their showing initiative and creativity in carrying out the set tasks. Considering the experience of the war and the new demands in the training of command personnel and the staffs, much attention is now being given to developing their firm skills which help in analyzing the situation profoundly and thoroughly, to correctly take into account economic, political, operational and technical factors, to assess objectively the combat capabilities of one's troops and the enemy, to take sound decisions quickly, to organize cooperation skillfully and maintain it in the course of fighting, and to control confidently and firmly the subordinate subunits and units.

The experience of the war significantly enriched Soviet military science and served as a dependable basis for its further development. Regardless of the complexity of the combat situation, the General Staff and the staffs of the field forces, formations and units systematically generalized the positive experience of the fighting and effectively provided this to the troops. Considering the changes in the organization and technical equipping of the Army and Navy and the appearance of new methods of carrying out battle tasks, during the war the field manual was reworked three times and the necessary corrections were incorporated regularly in the manuals and instructions for the Armed Services and the combat arms.

In the postwar period, in the development of Soviet military science, there has been a harmonious combination of the past experience with the bold positing and solving of new timely problems in military organizational development. Fundamental military theoretical works have been published, and many regulations and manuals have been revised. With the introduction of nuclear missile weapons into the Armed Forces, views have been worked out on the nature of a future war, the methods of conducting military operations, as well as the methods of troop training and indoctrination and so forth. Important theoretical concepts have been formulated determining the main paths for the further development of Soviet military science. A major achievement in military theoretical thought has been the further

elaboration of questions relating to the preparation and conduct of strategic, front and army operations as well as independent operations by the Armed Services.

The war's experience has completely maintained its significance also in carrying out the task of maintaining the Armed Forces in constant readiness to rebuff a surprise attack by the aggressor. As is known, one of the most important factors predetermining the bad course of events for the Soviet Army at the start of the Great Patriotic War was the delayed bringing of the troops in our border military districts to combat readiness. Without having completed their deployment, these troops were scattered over a broad front and to a great depth and this led to their uneven and hurried commitment to battle. The formations and units directly along the frontier, without being promptly brought to combat readiness, were forced to fight on unprepared lines and retreat into the interior of the nation.

At present, constant combat readiness of the Army and Navy has assumed particular importance. "The Armed Forces...." states the new version of the CPSU Program, "should show high vigilance and always be ready to thwart the intrigues of imperialism against the USSR and its allies." (8)

The lessons of the last war teach that the bases of combat readiness are put down in peacetime. Its elements are constantly being worked on in the system of military and political training and are carefully checked out in the course of exercises and maneuvers. Long before a war it is essential to establish a flexible and well-developed system for bringing the troops and naval forces to varying degrees of combat readiness. There was an urgent need for an early readiness of the headquarters bodies and communications facilities to immediately commence carrying out the functions entrusted to them in directing combat in any situation. Also clearly established was the need for early organization and preparation of logistic support for the troops (naval forces) and the corresponding allocation of material supplies. All these demands maintain their importance also under present-day conditions.

The experience of the Great Patriotic War has again confirmed that of crucial significance in achieving victory on the battlefields is leadership by the Communist Party over the organizational development of the Armed Forces. In the course of the war, the party gave unflinching attention to strengthening combat might and to increasing the combat capability of the Army and Navy, to their technical equipping, to improving the organizational structure and the command system, to preparing, indoctrinating and placing the military personnel and to increasing the level of party political work in the troops. Over the entire postwar period as during the war, CPSU leadership over the organizational development of the Armed Forces has been the basic fundamental in the strengthening of their combat might. Considering the international situation, the party has outlined the general

future for the development of the Army and Navy and has elaborated fundamental concepts in the area of their organizational development.

The war confirmed the inseparable link of troop (naval) combat successes with political indoctrination and high morale of the personnel. The military feats of the men in the Soviet Army will always serve as a vivid example of courage, heroism and loyalty to the cause of communism. In being guided by combat experience, the party has shown constant concern for the ideological indoctrination of the motherland's defenders who are constantly ready to rebuff an enemy attack, and it gives important significance to organizing effective party political work. "The CPSU considers it essential," states the new version of the CPSU Program, "to further strengthen its organizing and directing influence on the life and activities of the Armed Forces, to strengthen one-man command and to increase the role and influence of the political bodies and party organizations of the Soviet Army and Navy...." (9)

The article has briefly examined the importance of the significance of the experience of the Great Patriotic War merely for resolving the most important problems in the organizational development of the Armed Forces. However, it can be concluded with sufficient justification that it in its content is inexhaustible and no fundamentally important question in the area of the organizational development of the Army and Navy in all stages of their postwar development has been resolved without considering this and without utilizing all the positive factors in it. The creative application of this experience has contributed greatly to the successful development of the theory and practice of the organizational development of not only the Soviet Armed Forces but also the armies of the socialist countries as well as a number of developing nations.

Conversely, an underestimation of the experience of the last war has told negatively both in theory and in practice. Convincing confirmation of this is the tendency which appeared at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s to unjustifiably oversiate the rate of advance and the depth of the battle tasks of the units, formations and field forces. The subsequent practice of combat and operational training demonstrated its unsoundness.

In speaking about the exceptional importance of the experience of the last war, it is impossible not to point out that its influence at the different stages varied: greater in the postwar years when the troops were basically armed with the weapons and combat equipment which they had in the concluding period of the war and less subsequently when the extensive equipping of the Army and Navy with nuclear missile weapons required the incorporation of major corrections into the theory and practice of the organizational development of the Armed Forces. In this area new complex tasks had arisen and these required a thorough analysis and new

approaches. Over time the specific experience of the last war, with all its enormous significance, was no longer able to provide a satisfactory answer to a number of questions. In this context a correct assessment of this experience is possible under a condition of disclosing the trends in the development and succession of the examined phenomena and the natural replacement of the obsolete concepts by new ones.

Lastly, an important feature of the present-day military-technical revolution is that it is occurring under peacetime conditions, when the new types of weapons and military equipment, the methods of their employment and the organizational forms of the troops cannot be fully tested out in a combat situation. Under these conditions, the role of forecasting and scientific prediction has increased immeasurably in resolving all the questions of the organizational development and further development of the Armed Forces.

Footnotes

1. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 5, 1978, pp 343; Vol 2, 1976, p 56.

2. "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 464.

3. "Sovetskiye Vooruzhennyye Sily" [The Soviet Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, p 366.

4. Ibid., pp 367, 393.

5. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 515; "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 10, 1982, p 28.

6. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 12, p 242.

7. "Materialy XXVII syezda KPSS" [Materials of the 27th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, p 161.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

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On the Eve of Momentous Events

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[Article, published under the heading "Debates and Discussions," by Maj Gen A.G. Khorkov, doctor of historical sciences, "On the Eve of Momentous Events"]

[Text] The debate on the particular features and lessons of the initial period of the war will be all the more useful the more objectively it provides answers to the little-known or previously obscured questions and thoroughly and profoundly discloses the so-called "blank spots" in the treatment of the most acute problems. "Any smoothing over of history is inadmissible for us. History exists and it is merely a matter of showing it truthfully," emphasized the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev, in a meeting with the leaders of the mass information media, the ideological institutions and the creative unions.(1)

The article, on the basis of archival documents, sets out to analyze certain reasons for the unpunished violation of Soviet airspace by the Nazi aircraft and shows the intelligence activities carried out by the Wehrmacht in the zone of the Western military districts as well as the measures of the Communist Party, the Soviet government and the military command to prepare to repulse aggression.

One of the indications of Nazi Germany's preparations for war was the sharp intensification of its intelligence and provocative activities. The Soviet state security bodies, the border troops and military intelligence, in possessing rich experience and great capabilities for successfully combating enemy agents, promptly discovered this.

As the documents show, flights by Nazi German aviation which up to February 1940 were of a sporadic nature, from March became regular and mass. Thus, on 17 March 1940, in the zone of the Western special military district (ZaPOVO) the Soviet frontier was violated by a group consisting of 32 Nazi aircraft, and on 4 April in the Lvov area, by 6 aircraft. The frontier with Lithuania was crossed on 9 April from 1425 hours to 1608 hours by 5 aircraft and on 10 April from 1121 hours to 1428 hours by 14 aircraft.(2) From October 1939 through 22 June 1941, Nazi aviation invaded Soviet airspace more than 500 times.(3)

The command of the border military districts generally correctly assessed the nature and targets of the flights by the German violator aircraft, viewing them as the systematic conduct of reconnaissance with the photographing of the border zone. For example, according to information from the Air Forces Staff of the Baltic Special Military District (PribOVO) for 15-20 days before the start of the war, German reconnaissance aircraft photographed the airfields in the district's territory.(4) For this

they overflew the state frontier on the individual sectors several times a day and pushed 100-150 km into our airspace. As a rule, the routes of the violators coincided with the main railroads and highways and brought them to the most important population points and airfields.

In addition to the direct violations of the state frontier, there was also extensive reconnaissance carried out under the guise of losing direction during training flights and the landing of training aircraft with their reconnaissance crews at the most important airfields in the border zone. Thus, on 19 June 1941, a flight of Nazi aircraft landed 15 km to the southwest of Krystynopol and in the aircraft maps were discovered as far as the Proskurov area. The crews refused to give information and explained their landing by the need to get their bearings.(5)

Air espionage in the interior of our territory was carried out by a special high-altitude air flight under the command of Col Rouels. This was based in Budapest and conducted reconnaissance flights over the regions of Leningrad, the center of European Russia and toward the Caucasus. A film file of bombing targets was drawn up from the photographic materials obtained as a result of the aerial photographing.(6)

Due to air and clandestine intelligence, the Nazi Command was able to discover a significant number of our airfields and establish the approximate number and types of aircraft based at them. The "Memorandum on the Southwestern Part of Soviet Russia" issued by the German 4th Air Fleet contained extensive data on the number of Soviet aviation. It gave the total number of aircraft in the five Western border military districts in May 1941 as 6,262.(7) Over the entire first half of 1941, and particularly in the last 3 prewar months, German aviation, without encountering a proper rebuff from us, carried out systematic reconnaissance of Soviet territory.

The given facts require an explanation as to the passivity of Soviet aviation in combating the enemy air reconnaissance. This is important because the military history literature gives only figures characterizing the quantitative aspect of these violations. The archival documents show that the military councils of the border military districts and the command of the border troops systematically informed the People's Commissariat of Defense [NKO] on the intensifying instances of violation of the USSR state frontier by enemy aircraft and themselves endeavored to take the necessary measures to combat them. Thus, in the Kiev Special Military District [KOVO] on 18 June 1940, an order was issued by the district commander "On Prohibiting Air Flights" and this demanded that "measures to force a landing should be initiated against aircraft appearing in a prohibited flight zone...." On 16 July 1940, the order was issued "On Violating the State Frontier by Foreign Aircraft" and this ordered: "...in any event of attempting to violate

the state frontier by foreign aircraft, effective measures are to be taken to eliminate the violations...so that no foreign aircraft can appear over our territory or escape with impunity."(8)

Undoubtedly, in those instances the most effective measure which could have prevented flights by foreign aircraft over our territory would have been the clear instructions from the command to shoot them down. However, such an order was not given. On the contrary, on 29 March 1940, the USSR people's commissar of internal affairs (NKVD) sent a directive to the border troops of the Western districts which stated: "In violating the Soviet-German frontier by aircraft or air navigation devices, fire is not to be opened, in limiting oneself to drawing up an act on the violation of the state frontier."(9) In April 1940, orders prohibiting the firing on German aircraft were issued to the cover troops of the Western military districts and in March 1941 also to the Baltic Fleet.(10)

For conducting air reconnaissance and the landing of its aircraft at Soviet airfields, the Nazi Military Command used the Convention on the Procedure for Resolving Conflicts and Incidents on the State Frontier Between the USSR and Germany concluded on 10 June 1940. According to Article 5, Point 5 of this Convention, in instances of the violating of the frontier line, an investigation was to be appointed. If it was established that the crossing (overflight) of the frontier was unintentional (due to a loss of direction, equipment malfunction, the running out of fuel and so forth), then the crossing (overflying) person was to be returned.

The chief of the Main Directorate of the Border Troops on 7 April 1941 wrote a special note to the NKVD in which he stated that German aircraft had been systematically violating the frontier from Romanian territory. In line with this, he requested permission and a procedure for employing weapons. On the same day, the NKVD forwarded a letter to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) with a request to provide an explanation on the question raised. To this letter the NKID on 10 April 1941 replied that "protests on the violating of the USSR frontier by German aircraft must be drawn up in accord with the existing rules, on the basis of the Convention Between the USSR and Germany on Settling Border Conflicts and Incidents of 10 June 1940 as well as in form the NKID or the taking of the appropriate measures through diplomatic channels."(11) The Chief of the Border Troops of the Ukrainian NKVD, Maj Gen V.A. Khomenko, on 4 April 1941 stated that "the presence of the order as well as the order through the Red Army reduces our role to passive observance and the stating of complaints which have not produced any effective result."(12)

Thus, the fact that the German aircraft were not downed on the eve of the war by the air defense weapons of the border military districts, in our view, is explained primarily by the agreement reached between the countries

and which was scrupulously carried out by the Soviet side. Undoubtedly, the permitting of almost unobstructed flights by Nazi aviation over our territory was a serious mistake. However, at that time such actions were not questioned for they were carried out to avoid pretexts which could aggravate the situation and thereby accelerate the initiating of a war.

In addition to air reconnaissance or more precisely in parallel and jointly with it, clandestine intelligence activities were also carried out. Even long before the attack by Nazi Germany, we had to enter a real war against German agents. In commenting on the importance of intelligence activities in carrying out the aggressive plans of German Nazism against the USSR, one of the leaders of German intelligence Schellenburg pointed out: "Decisive actions by all the secret services against Russia must be considered the primary and most important task."(13)

Enemy intelligence frequently sent in agents under the guise of refugees and smugglers, taking advantage of the fact that many refugees escaping from Nazi repression crossed from Nazi-occupied Poland to the Soviet Union.

"From August-September 1940," pointed out the former chief of the Abwehr-I sector, Lt Gen G. Pickenbrok, at the Nuremberg Trial, "from the Foreign Armies Section of the General Staff there began to be a significant increase in intelligence assignments for the Abwehr relating to the USSR. These assignments undoubtedly were linked to the preparations for war against Russia."(14) In the first stage the chief place was assigned to securing intelligence data on our troop grouping in the border area and to a thorough study of the forthcoming theater of operations. Subsequently, the chief efforts were focused on the major operational sectors.

Of the 232 agents apprehended by Soviet bodies in 1940, 119 were in the Minsk area, 87 in the Kiev and 26 in the Leningrad. It must be pointed out that while the total number of enemy agents apprehended on the Western frontier in the first quarter of 1941 had increased by an average of more than 5-fold in comparison with the corresponding period of the previous year, on the most important operational sectors this increased by 10-12-fold.(15) Reconnaissance was carried out in the entire zone of the forthcoming Nazi troop offensive to a depth of 150-200 km and on the Leningrad, Minsk and Kiev sectors this was carried out to 300-400 km and more.

By the summer of 1941, the activities of the Nazi intelligence services had noticeably increased. The agents began to be dropped in without radios and had an assignment of making their way back no later than 15-18 June(16) obviously so that their data could be effectively used by the command.

Regardless of the fact that Nazi intelligence by the summer of 1941 had established approximately the effective strength and size of the Soviet troops in the Western border military districts, it had a hazy notion of the USSR Armed Forces as a whole. The conclusion of the West German historian P. Karell on this question is no accident: "What was the situation with German espionage against Russia? What did the German leadership know from the secret service? The answer is just two words: very little!... Before the start of the war we had estimated 200 divisions in the Red Army. Six weeks after the start of the war we were forced to establish that there were 360 of them."(17)

Of important significance in the activities of the Soviet Command was a profound and thorough study of the situation in the aim of promptly ascertaining the enemy's intentions and the measures being carried out by it to prepare the theater of war, to determine the enemy grouping and the dates for the possible start of hostilities. At the beginning of 1940, information began to be received on the growing military preparations of Germany in the regions of Northern Europe and the Baltic. In the German units occupying Norway, they studied not Norwegian but rather Russian.(18)

The situation had become significantly more complex on the Western frontiers from the second half of 1940, when Nazi Germany began direct preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union. In September 1940, the Chief of Intelligence of the Leningrad Military District, Brig Comdr P.P. Yevstigneyev, reported to the command on the concentration of Nazi troops in the North. It was also learned that in the border regions of Finland adjacent to the USSR a closed zone had been established and this reached 130-400 km. Here intensive construction of roads to our frontier was underway.

The Chief of the Intelligence Section of the Staff of the ZaPOVO, Col S.V. Blokhin, stated that the concentrating of Nazi troops which had begun in the summer of 1940 on Polish territory bordering the USSR continued subsequently and on an even greater scale. At this time, the Brest Border Detachment began receiving information from refugees on the arrival of new Wehrmacht formations and units in occupied Poland.(19)

From 9 through 14 December 1940, the Commander of the Ground Troops, Field Mar Brauchitsch accompanied by 30 higher officers, including Field Mars W. List and W. Reichenau, made a trip along the Soviet-German frontier. The true reasons for this were not established and it was felt that "he visited the border points in order to become familiar with the billeting and placement of the German Army units for the winter season."(20) However, it was further pointed out that after this reconnaissance there began intense construction and repair of the roads running from Germany across Poland to our frontier. New communications lines were strung, and work was carried out to build and expand the

railroads and bridges, the ammunition dumps, motor bases and fuel centers. Around 100 field airstrips and 50 landing strips were built.(21)

In February 1941, additional data was received showing the preparations of Nazi Germany to attack the Soviet Union and this was to happen no later than the summer of 1941. In the interests of concealing these measures the troops were to be concentrated supposedly for recreation after the fighting on the Western Front, for undergoing combat training, for reinforcing the garrisons in Poland, for relieving the formations arriving from the front and so forth.

Beginning in April 1941, they began to notice the arrival directly at the frontier of a large number of new troop units as well as mass construction of various types of military engineer structures. At the end of April and in May, the arriving formations began to build trenches, communications trenches, dugouts and observation posts. Well organized information made it possible for the command of the border military districts to have rather accurate data on the enemy.

In the documents of the ZaPOVO of 1 May 1941, it was pointed out that the opposing grouping in the zone of the district included: 28-29 infantry divisions, 7-8 panzer regiments, 3-4 motorized divisions and up to 3 cavalry divisions, up to 5 combat engineer regiments and 3 air regiments.(22) The KOVO Staff learned that the German troop grouping in the zone of the district on 1 June 1941 numbered 25-28 infantry divisions, 4-5 panzer divisions, 5 motorized divisions and up to 1,000 aircraft. Over the period from April through May, 10 infantry divisions, a panzer division and a motorized division had been moved up directly to the frontier to a depth of 30 km. Construction of field-type defensive works was strengthened.(23)

From mid-May to 10 June 1941, they noticed the arrival on the adjacent side of reconnaissance groups, photographing and topographic surveying and measuring work on the border rivers.(24) It was learned that in the evening of 2 June 1941, Romanian officers were invited to a ball organized at the staff headquarters of a German motorized division. The German general in an introductory speech stated: "Fellow officers! The hour has come to recover Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina by joint efforts and get back the Ukraine."(25) On the same day, the chief of the Brest Border Detachment reported to the command that at many points close to the frontier the Germans had concentrated pontoons, wooden, canvas and inflatable boats. There were most of these on the crossings at the Brest sector.

From the Main Directorate of the Border Troops Under the NKVD on 2 June 1941, it was learned that 80-88 infantry divisions, 13-15 motorized divisions and 7 panzer divisions, 65 artillery regiments and other units had been concentrated close to our Western frontier (during April-May).(26) On 5 June, the command

received information that almost daily 200 rail cars with ammunition, military supplies and food were arriving in the region of Iasi, Botosani and other areas. All the supplies were being concentrated along the railroad at temporary dumps under an awning. The infantry, artillery and tanks were being moved up to our frontiers predominantly at night. The entire zone in the immediate proximity of the frontier was reinforced by artillery and machine gun positions with "complete organization of telephone communications between the batteries, the command and observation posts."(27) Subsequently, on 10 June, it was announced that "war should begin in the last days of June 1941" and "German tactics is based on a surprise attack and for this purpose they are presently concentrating their forces on the frontier with the Soviet Union." On the northern sector, in Finland, from 10 June there were outright mobilization and the moving of the units and formations to the Soviet frontier. At the same time, the civilian population was moved from the border areas into the interior of the territory.

On 17 June, the German vessels began leaving Soviet ports. On 18 June, it was established that the Nazi armies had taken up the forming-up position and the local inhabitants were being moved to the rear. In the sector of the 93d Border Detachment a man shouted at the border detail from Polish territory: "The Germans will soon be coming for you."(28) On the same day, a German deserter provided information that at 0400 hours in the morning of 22 June the Nazi troops would go over to the offensive along the entire length of the Soviet-German frontier.(29) During the period from 15 through 20 June, in the entire Western border zone they systematically observed the moving up of heavy guns to the frontier, their placing in firing positions and the stacking of artillery shells.

On 20 June 1941, the documents point out that "detachments of field troops with light machine guns have appeared on the frontier." On the same day in the region of the border markers No. 300-301, German soldiers drew "USSR" on the sandy bank of the Western Bug and then crossed out the letters, trampled them with their feet and threatened with their weapons our border troops serving there.

"Among the servicemen and civilian population of East Prussia," it was pointed out in the documents of the Baltic Special Military District on 21 June, "there are talks that the troops stationed in East Prussia have received orders to take up the initial position for the offensive."(30) The documents also stated the completion of throwing up pontoon bridges across the Neman and that on 21 June in exercises the platoon commander Lt Shultz explained to the soldiers that an offensive against the Soviet Union would commence at dawn of 22 June.(31)

Thus, on the basis of the received data, the military councils in the districts had a rather clear notion of the concentration of enemy troops and the nature of its

possible combat actions. Thus, the command of the PriboVO was informed of the concentration of two army groupings (18th and 9th Armies) in East Prussia. The four sectors of concentrating the main enemy forces were also discovered: Memel, Telshay up to 3 infantry divisions and a panzer division; Tilsit, Shyaulay up to 8 infantry divisions, 2 motorized divisions and a panzer division and a cavalry brigade with 250-300 aircraft; Stallunenen, Kaunas—up to 4 infantry divisions, a motorized division and a panzer division and up to 150-200 aircraft; Suvalki, Vilno—up to 3 infantry divisions, 2 motorized divisions and a panzer division and a cavalry brigade with 75-100 aircraft. Reserves were discovered in the areas of Königsberg, Rastenburg and Letzen with up to 6 infantry divisions, a motorized division and a panzer division and 300-350 aircraft.(32)

The given facts show that the intelligence bodies and the border troops of the NKVD had succeeded in assembling rather complete and reliable information on the grouping and number of Nazi troops concentrated along our frontier as well as establish the time of the possible attack on the USSR. This made it possible to draw convincing conclusions on the preparations of Nazi Germany for an attack on the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government, considering the possibility of aggression, carried out enormous work to ready the nation to repel it.(33) The defense industry was developing at an accelerated pace and over the 3 years of the third five-year plan the increase in its product surpassed by an average of 3-fold the increase of industrial product as a whole. The nation's defense expenditures were increased from 40 billion rubles in 1939 to 56 billion rubles in 1940 and in the following year they were to reach 71 billion rubles. This was: in 1939, 25.6 percent of the total state budget, in 1940, 32.6 percent and in 1941, 43.4 percent.

By the end of 1940, the General Staff had worked out a new strategic deployment plan and in accord with this there was an increase in the size of the USSR Armed Forces and their technical reequipping. In June 1941, the Army and Navy had over 5 million men, more than 67,000 guns and mortars, 1,861 new model tanks such as the T-34 and KV and more than 20,000 obsolete-design tanks many of which needed major and medium repairs.(34) In 1940 and in the first half of 1941, the Air Forces received 2,739 modern aircraft such as the MiG-3, Yak-1, LaGG-3, Pe-2 and Il-2. The Navy included 563 fighting ships, with 287 torpedo boats.

Major measures were carried out to constitute new units and formations as well as reorganize the existing ones. Thus, while on 1 September 1939, there were 25 rifle corps headquarters, 96 rifle divisions and 1 motorized rifle division, by the start of the Great patriotic War there were 62 rifle corps headquarters and 198 rifle divisions (including 19 mountain-rifle and 2 motorized rifle). From 1940, the constituting of tank and motorized

divisions began and, as a rule, these were incorporated in the 9 established mechanized corps. In February-March 1941, the organizing of another 20 mechanized corps was commenced.

By the moment of the attack by Nazi Germany on the USSR, 79 air divisions and 5 air brigades had been constituted. The long-range bomber aviation consisted of 13 bomber divisions and 5 fighter divisions, while the front and army aviation had 61 divisions. The number of air regiments by June 1941, in comparison with the start of 1939, had increased by more than 80 percent. At the same time, the constituting of 5 long-range bomber air corps was completed and these were employed by the High Command. The establishing of air defense fighter aviation had begun by shifting 40 fighter air regiments (around 1,500 aircraft) to the air defense command and the constituting of special fighter air corps for covering important strategic objectives.

In response to the commenced deployment of the Wehrmacht, the NKO and the General Staff, upon instructions of the party Central Committee and the Soviet government, began to carry out a series of measures for the strategic deployment of the Soviet Armed Forces in the west of the nation. From mid-May, four armies began to move up there from the interior military districts and another three at the same time were preparing to move. These seven armies were to comprise the second strategic echelon. The total volume of shipments from the interior military districts to the border ones was 939 trains.

Thus, the Communist Party and the Soviet government, in response to the aggressor's preparations for war, outlined and implemented a whole series of measures to boost the nation's military-economic potential as much as possible under those conditions, for strengthening combat might and carrying out strategic deployment of the Army and Navy. However, for a number of objective and subjective reasons, they could not or, more accurately, were unable to completely carry out all that had been planned.

Footnotes

1. *Pravda*, 13 January 1988.
2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 35, inv. 225925, file 3, sheet 235.
3. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1974, p 332.
4. TsAMO, folio 221, inv. 142687, file 1, sheet 8.
5. *Ibid.*, folio 131, inv. 9776, file 83, sheet 65.

6. See: "Nyurnbergskiy protsess" [The Nuremberg Trial], Moscow, Izd-vo Yuridicheskoy Literatury, Vol 2, 1958, pp 104-105.
7. TsAMO, folio 35, inv. 92860, file 28, sheets 8-18.
8. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 25880, inv. 4, file 346, sheets 75-78.
9. TsAPV [Central Archives of the Border Troops], folio 14, inv. 224, file 110, sheet 1.
10. Ibid., sheets 17, 21.
11. "Pogranichnyye voyska SSSR 1939—iyun 1941: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov" [The USSR Border Troops in 1939—June 1941: Collection of Documents and Materials], Moscow, Nauka, 1970, p 484.
12. Ibid., p 366.
13. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy..., " Vol 2, 1974, p 166.
14. "Nyurnbergskiy protsess," Vol 2, p 640.
15. TsGASA, folio 32891, inv. 3, file 1s, sheets 7-8.
16. TsAPV, folio 14, inv. 224, file 4119, sheet 64.
17. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy..., " Vol 3, p 333.
18. "Ordena Lenina Leningradskiy voyennyy okrug" [The Order of Lenin Leningrad Military District], Leningrad, Lenizdat, 1968, p 181.
19. TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 30981, file 6, sheets 573-575.
20. TsGASA, folio 25874, inv. 2, file 520, sheet 378.
21. Ibid., file 530, sheets 390, 436.
22. Ibid., sheet 508.
23. TsAMO, folio 131, inv. 422501, file 1, sheets 10-11.
24. Ibid., inv. 42450, file 1, sheets 10-11.
25. Ibid., folio 461, inv. 4568, file 1, sheet 16.
26. TsAPV, folio 14, inv. 224, file 4119, sheets 22, 23.
27. TsGASA, folio 25874, inv. 2, file 530, sheets 572, 575.
28. TsAMO, folio 461, inv. 34568, file 1, sheets 10, 12, 15, 18.
29. I.I. Fedyuninskiy, "Podnyatyie po trevoge" [Alerted], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, p 11.
30. TsAMO, folio 211, inv. 7833, file 3, sheet 20.

31. TsGASA, folio 32880, inv. 5, file 279, sheet 2; TsAPV, folio 4, inv. 224, file 419, sheet 64.

32. TsAMO, folio 221, inv. 1351, file 200, sheet 2.

33. The author has written on this in more detail in the articles previously published in *Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal*: "Combat and Political Training of the KOVO Troops on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War" (No 11, 1971), "The Red Banner Odessa Military District on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War" (No 6, 1974), "Measures to Increase Combat Readiness of the Western Military Districts on the Eve of the War" (No 4, 1978), "From the Experience of Mobilizing the Ground Troops" (No 4, 1982), "Certain Questions in the Strategic Deployment of the Soviet Armed Forces at the Start of the Great Patriotic War" (No 1, 1986), "Technical Rearming of the Soviet Army on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War" (No 6, 1987) and "Fortified Areas on the USSR Western Frontiers" (No 12, 1987).

34. "Istoriya otechestvennoy artillerii" [History of Domestic Artillery], Moscow-Leningrad, Vol 3, Book 8, 1964, p 217; TsGASA, folio 31811, inv. 12, file 1086, sheet 57.

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Strengthening Security of USSR Western Frontier on Eve of Great Patriotic War

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[Article by Lt Col (Res) V.I. Belyayev, candidate of historical sciences and docent: "Strengthening the Security of the USSR Western Frontier on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] On the eve of the war, it was not quiet on the USSR Western state frontier which stretched some 4,520 km. At the border outposts, not a day passed without combat alerts. In 1940 alone, here there were 235 incidents provoked by the German side.(1) Over the 11 prewar months, around 5,000 enemy scouts were apprehended.(2) In the first quarter of 1941, the number of enemy apprehended and destroyed agents and saboteurs increased by 15-20-fold, and in the second by 25-30-fold in comparison with the corresponding periods of 1940.(3)

A particularly tense situation had developed on the Soviet frontier in Belorussia and the Ukraine. For example, in the sector of the 17th Brest Red Banner Border Detachment, the 20 line outposts of which were positioned along a front of 180 km, in 1940, 1,242 spies and saboteurs were apprehended(4) and in the first quarter of 1941, 114 Nazi spies were eliminated and scores of armed incursions were thwarted. The most active in the

Brest Border Detachment was the sector covering Brest to the southwest. The Tomashchovka Outpost located at the Brest—Wadawa rail and highway junction and protecting the frontier along an inspected zone less than 5 km long, apprehended around 25 percent of the total number of spies eliminated at all the detachment's outposts.(6)

The Nazis also conducted air reconnaissance intensely. Over the incomplete 6 months of 1941, 324 instances of the intentional violating of USSR airspace by Nazi aircraft were recorded.(8) Onboard one of these which was forced to land in the border area by Soviet pilots in May 1941, there were reconnaissance instruments, maps for a number of oblasts, films with photographed Soviet airfields and other military installations. Another German aircraft which violated the frontier in the region of the settlement of Domachevo at the beginning of June 1941 endeavored to reconnoiter the positions of our units covering the Brest sector.

And the less time remaining until the date set by Hitler for the start of the war against the USSR the more frequent the subversive actions by the Nazi German intelligence bodies. In addition to agents, the Nazis sent in large numbers of sabotage and reconnaissance groups with the task of destroying communications lines with the start of military operations, blowing up bridges, railroads on the Soviet troop lines as well as destroying military and industrial installations.(9) The Nazis showed particular activity on the Belostok and Brest sectors, where the USSR state frontier was defended by the 17th, 83d, 86th, 87th and 88th Border Detachments.

Under conditions where the western frontier of our motherland was more and more being turned into an arena of sharp conflict between the Soviet border troops and an enemy which had intensified subversive actions, the importance of strengthening and securing the frontier had immeasurably risen. The Communist Party, in carrying out the decisions of the 18th Congress and the 18th Party Conference on the questions of increasing the nation's defense capability, viewed reliable security of the state frontier as one of the most important factors in ensuring national security. Upon the decision of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the Soviet government, in 1940-1941, an extensive range of measures was undertaken to strengthen the USSR Western frontier. These included: the main tasks of the border troops and the principles of securing the frontier were clarified under the conditions of a deteriorating military-political situation(10); the number of border troops was increased and their logistic support improved; the border detachments and outposts were equipped with new models of weapons and combat equipment; high combat readiness was maintained in the units and subunits; party political and indoctrinational work with the personnel was strengthened; closer cooperation was organized with the units and formations of the covering troops for the border military districts; the local population was actively involved in aiding the border troops.

The number of border troops guarding the Western frontier was increased by 1.5-fold and brought up to 100,000 men. Some 28 border detachments, scores of commandant offices and hundreds of outposts were newly constituted. Reserve subunits were organized in each detachment and commandant office. The size of many outposts was brought up to 70-80 men. The density of troop security per kilometer of border sector in 1940-1941 was more than trebled in comparison with the second half of the 1930s. In a majority of the outposts in the Belorussian and Ukrainian Border Districts, this exceeded 15 men per kilometer and in many reached 25 men. By June 1941, the Western frontier of the USSR was guarded by 47 land and 6 sea border detachments, 9 separate commandant offices and 11 regiments of the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] operations troops. Of the 796 border outposts guarding the state frontier from the Baltic to the Black Seas, 485 were in Belorussia and the Ukraine.(11)

The organizational structure of the border troops remained as before: district—detachment—commandant office—outpost, however their TOE were significantly increased. There were more detachments, commandant offices and outposts and the border districts were reorganized. The headquarters of the Belorussian Border District was moved from Minsk to Belostok and that of the Ukrainian from Kiev to Lvov. The Murmansk, Karelo-Finnish, Baltic, Moldavian and Black Sea Border Districts were organized in addition. The Leningrad District was reconstituted and significant changes made in the Belorussian and Ukrainian Districts.

The strengthening of the border troops was also positively influenced by the selection of men for them. Amongst those inducted in 1939, 48.2 percent were workers, 33.2 percent were kolkhoz members and 18.6 percent were white collar personnel and students; communists and Komsomol members comprised 61 percent; 97.7 percent of the inducted youth had a higher, secondary (complete and incomplete) and primary education.(12) The induction into the border troops in 1940 was even higher quality. For example, of the 466 men who arrived at the 17th Brest Border Detachment, around 70 percent were workers and over 25 percent were white collar personnel; communists and Komsomol members were over 72 percent; 95 percent had a higher and secondary education (complete and incomplete).(13)

A special place was held by the questions of strengthening the border troops with officer personnel and who in 1940-1941 were being trained at 11 military schools of the NKVD, in a number of military academies and other institutions of learning. The Western Frontier was fully up to strength in terms of commanders, political workers, engineers and technicians who possessed high combat, special and moral-political qualities. Communists were 33 percent among the commanders and 93 percent among the political workers.

At the same time, the border troops were technically reequipped. The detachments, commandant offices and outposts began receiving new equipment, weapons and facilities for protecting the frontier. By the spring of 1941, the Ukrainian Border District, for example, was armed with 300 medium machine guns and more than 600 light machine guns and around 500 motor vehicles. In just 5 detachments of the Belorussian District there were 400 motor vehicles and in the outposts there were around 6,500 semiautomatic rifles, 2,500 submachine guns, 400 light machine guns and 200 medium machine guns. Each outpost had 2 medium machine guns and 4 light ones and on the main sectors of the frontier (at the 17th Brest Border Detachment, for example) there were 3 medium and 6 light machine guns and 2 or 3 grenade launchers. The supply of RGD-33 grenades was up to 1,000 and cartridges were up to 120,000.

Work was being carried out actively for the engineer reinforcing of the Western frontier. For this purpose, the Soviet government had allocated up to 10 million rubles to the border troops in 1940.(14) The outposts were equipped with observation posts and wire fences, signal and communications systems were organized, inspected strips were laid out and observation and firing sectors cleared. Each of these had a well-developed system of all-round defense which included four or five block-houses connected by communications trenches, firing positions for the medium and light machine guns and around the external perimeter were field-type trenches and wire fences.

According to a decision of the USSR government, a 7.5-km border zone was established and in it there was an 800-m strip from which in 1940 the inhabitants of all population points (with the exception of cities) were removed.

For reinforcing the state frontier, they began assigning from the Soviet Army units mobile support detachments which were alertable within 30 minutes and stationed in the border zone. The plans for their joint actions were regularly adjusted, reciprocal informing of situational data was carried out, measures were taken to increase combat readiness and joint command-staff and tactical exercises were held.

The local population was widely involved in providing help to the border troops in guarding the frontier. Upon the decision of the party and soviet bodies, assistance brigades were organized in nearby population points on volunteer principles. By the beginning of 1941, in the border zone of the Ukraine and Belorussia, in these brigades there were 25,000 local inhabitants including communists, Komsomol members and activists.

In decisively thwarting the brazen provocations by the Nazis, the Soviet Command at the same time observed caution and did everything possible not to give Germany a pretext to draw the USSR into a war. From March 1940, the border troops were prohibited from opening

fire against German aircraft who invaded our airspace as well as use firearms against violators, if here the bullets could reach adjacent territory.(15) These instructions hindered the actions of the border troops.

The principles for guarding the frontier and the actions of the personnel in the various situations were reinforced by new guiding documents which emphasized that "any violator who crosses the frontier into our territory should be located, apprehended or destroyed at whatever the cost."(16)

Proceeding from the tasks confronting the troops, party political work was organized and conducted on the basis of the theses of the March (1940) Plenum of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the demands of the directive of the NKO published in August 1940 and the directives to the NKVD Border Troops "On the Restructuring of Party Political Work." The latter emphasized that in a situation of a growing threat of war, it was essential to show maximum vigilance and to be in constant combat readiness.(17) Political bodies were set up in a number of the border detachments, and in the commandant offices and outposts in addition they introduced the positions of instructor for party political work, deputy political instructor as well as Komsomol workers.

The party organizations were support for the commanders and political workers. By the end of 1940, these existed in all the commandant offices and at a majority of the outposts. Communists were 26 percent of the border troops along the Western frontier. In word and deed and by personal example they led the nonparty troops. Of the 388 communists in the 17th Brest Border Detachment, for example, by the start of 1941, 177 were outstanding men in training and over 280 were masters of border service.(18)

In May-June 1941, in the border troops meetings were conducted for the party aktiv of the districts, party meetings for the detachments and commandant offices as well as Komsomol conferences. In discussing the state of the security of the frontier and their tasks under the conditions of an exacerbating situation, their participants demanded that the communists "wage the most decisive struggle against pacifistic moods and mobilize all the personnel to increase revolutionary vigilance."(19) In the decrees approved, the communists confirmed the oath of the border troops given to the Communist Party at the 18th Congress:

If an alert engulfs the frontier, Then into battle I go,
Ready to fight until the complete victory, Sparing neither life nor force.(20)

Due to the sharply exacerbated situation, from the beginning of May 1941, they began to send out on guard reinforced detachments armed with machine guns, grenades and an increased amount of ammunition. In the following month, upon instructions from the command of the border districts, additional measures were carried

out at the outposts to increase combat readiness. Here all the servicemen who were at courses, on official trips were to return to their units and subunits; the outposts of the operational sectors were reinforced by the reserve detachments; in the subunits they increased the supply of grenades and cartridges; the medium machine guns were emplaced in firing positions with loaded belts and the required supply of ammunition. By this time they had completed the external ring of defensive structures around the detachment, field-type trenches were built on the main sectors of the frontier and tactical exercises were conducted where they worked through different variations of cooperating with adjacent units, with the reserves of the commandant offices and the assigned units and subunits of the Soviet Army.

At the same time, the cooperation plans were clarified between the border troops and the first-echelon cover formations. Thus, the commanders and staffs of the 98th and 90th border detachments of the Ukrainian District discussed plans of joint actions with the command and staff of the 5th Army and the formations comprising it and in the Belorussian Border District with the command and staffs of the 3d, 10th and 4th Armies. The chiefs of the outposts and the commandant offices on the left flank of the 17th Brest Border Detachment, for example, met with the commander of the 75th Rifle Division, Maj Gen S.I. Nedvigin, and the commanders of the 28th and 34th Rifle Regiments. They exchanged data on the situation, they studied the terrain in the division's zone in the event of a Nazi invasion, and adjusted the cooperation plans with the border troops. The Commander of the XV Rifle Corps, Col I.I. Fedyninskiy, with a group of staff workers and divisional and regimental commanders, on 17-18 June, visited many outposts in the zone of the frontier covered by the corps formations (the 45th Division which was part of the corps and under the command of Maj Gen G.I. Sherst-yuk was positioned on the boundary of the Belorussian and Kiev Special Military Districts) and in the field worked out the questions of cooperation. Analogous measures were carried out in all sectors of the Belorussian and Ukrainian Border Districts.

The last days before the attack were spent by the border troops of a majority of outposts in fighting to eliminate the enemy sabotage groups and detachments which had tried to reach the positions of the Soviet cover troops. Thus, the border details of the 88th Shepetovo Detachment fought a Nazi assault group in the area of the railroad bridge on the Grodno—Warsaw line. Border troops from the 17th Brest Detachment in the city and its surroundings destroyed saboteurs who had been moved across the frontier by the Nazis in railroad cars with double bottoms. Reinforced details from the 90th Vladimir-Volynskiy Detachment eliminated OUN [Ukrainian nationalist organization] armed groups operating together with German agents. In the sector of the 92d Peremysl Detachment fighting occurred against a sabotage detachment which had broken across the frontier.

Considering the sharply aggravated situation and the growing activeness of the Nazis on the Soviet frontier, a majority of the commanders and political workers in the border districts and detachments on 18-20 June 1941 traveled to the outposts where on the spot they inspected the combat readiness, the state of security on the frontier and explained the developing situation to the personnel. For example, the command of the 86th, 88th, 87th, 17th, 98th, 90th and 92d Detachments, having assessed the entire danger of the situation on the frontier, ordered all subunits to be brought to full combat readiness on the 21st and during the night of 22 June 1941, that the security of the approaches to them be reinforced and they be ready to repel a possible armed aggression.

The border troops carried out their duty. During the prewar months they had paralyzed the actions of Nazi intelligence in collecting data about the Soviet Army units in the Western districts. And while for peacetime the frontier was securely covered⁽²¹⁾ this was the result of the enormous concern shown by the Communist Party for ensuring its security as well as due to the great work of the commanders, the political bodies and the party organizations of the troops.

At dawn of 22 June 1941, along an enormous front from the Baltic to the Black Seas, the border outposts entered unequal battle against the Nazi hordes. Along with the sparse Soviet Army garrisons, they received the first thrust by the Nazi military machine. "The Soviet border troops fought like lions," *Pravda* wrote on 24 June 1941. "They fought hand-to-hand and it was only across their dead bodies that the enemy could advance a foot forward." The soldiers of the frontier demonstrated high moral and political qualities and a readiness to courageously defend the fatherland's frontiers.

In studying the documents and materials of the prewar years and being direct witness and participant in what occurred on the Western Frontier of the USSR on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, one can clearly see the enormous organizational and political activities of the Communist Party and the greatness of what was done in the interests of strengthening the security of the state frontier and reinforcing the border troops. At the same time, it must be pointed out that not everything planned by the Communist Party in strengthening the Western frontier was able to be carried out. The technical rearming of the border units and outposts have not been fully completed. In a number of sectors they had not completed the engineer organization of the frontier. There were also omissions in the training of the subunits, and cooperation plans with the Soviet Army formations and units had not been worked out everywhere. The reasons for the designated shortcomings were not only objective but also subjective and depended upon certain commanders and political workers. All of this told negatively on the actions of the troops during the first day of the war on certain sectors of the Western frontier and particularly in Belorussia.

Footnotes

1. Central Museum of the Border Troops (TsMVP), Documentary Holdings, dossier 103, file 4, sheet 23.
2. "Istoriya KPSS" [History of the CPSU], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 5, Book 1, 1970, p 141.
3. "60 let na strazhe gosudarstvennykh granits SSSR" [60 Years on Guard for the USSR State Frontiers], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1979, p 105.
4. TsMVP, Documentary Holdings, dossier 170, file 5, sheets 6, 23 (Historical Service List of Detachment).
5. TsAPV [Central Archives of the Border Troops], folio 534, inv. 1, file 60, sheet 229.
6. Ibid., sheet 230.
7. [Not in text]
8. "Istoriya KPSS," Vol 5, Book 1, p 141.
9. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1974, p 332.
10. As a result of the liberation campaigns of 1939-1940 by the Soviet troops and the voluntary annexation of the Baltic republics as part of the USSR, the state frontier in the west ran along a new line and its security had to be organized from scratch. At the same time, we continued to defend the old frontier, where there was a border obstacle zone guarded by scores of outposts united in border detachments. Five border detachments were left just on the former Soviet-Polish frontier for securing the obstacle zone. Such a measure was dictated by the increasing intelligence and subversive activities of the imperialist states which employed for their purposes bourgeois-nationalist bands and other anti-Soviet organizations which had remained in the Western oblasts of Belorussia, the Ukraine and the Baltic. For example, on the old frontier in 1940 and the beginning of 1941, scores of Nazi spies were detected including among the apprehended violators.
11. TsAPV, folio 534, inv. 1, file 76, sheets 21-110; "Chasovyye sovetskikh granits: Kratkiy ocherk istorii pogranichnykh voysk SSSR" [Sentries of the Soviet Frontiers: Brief Outline of the History of the USSR Border Troops], Moscow, Politizdat, 1979, pp 91, 98-99.
12. "Chasovyye sovetskikh granits:...", pp 91-92.
13. TsMVP, Documentary Holdings, dossier 170, file 5, sheet 7 (Historical Service List of Detachment).
14. "Chasovyye sovetskikh granits:...", p 92.

15. TsMVP, Documentary Holdings, dossier 160, file 8, sheet 25.

16. Ibid., folio 534, inv. 1, file 52, sheet 3.

17. Ibid., folio 354, inv. 7, file 65, sheets 6-7, 68.

18. Ibid., Documentary Holdings, dossier 170, file 5, sheets 55-56 (Historical Service List of Detachment).

19. Ibid., folio 534, inv. 1, file 66, sheets 7-17.

20. "XVIII syezd Vsesoyuznoy Kommunisticheskoy partii (b) 10-21 marta 1939 g." [18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) of 10-21 March 1939. Verbatim Report], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1939, p 503.

21. See: I.Kh. Bagramyan, "Tak nachinalas voyna" [Thus Began the War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1971, p 59.

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U.S. Strategic Troop Movements

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[Article, published under the heading "World War II," by Maj Gen A.V. Viktorov, doctor of military sciences: "U.S. Strategic Troop Movements"]

[Text] The United States entered World War II in a favorable strategic situation for itself. Germany and Japan could not seriously threaten U.S. territory and the main theaters of operations were a significant distance away from the American continent. Under such conditions, the military political leadership of this power, in possessing a mighty economic base and a developed industry, endeavored to deal a rebuff to the enemy on the forward lines, far away from its territory as well as reinforce and widen its own positions on global and regional scales.

At the beginning of 1942, the United States adopted a program for the accelerated development of defense production and for building up the nation's armed forces. This program met the political and military-strategic goals of American imperialism, namely: to achieve a military defeat of its main competitors—Nazi Germany and militaristic Japan, and create conditions for American domination in the postwar world.

The presence of the necessary energy and material resources and the great remoteness of the United States from the theaters of operations made it possible to quickly increase the output of weapons, military equipment and supplies in the nation and not only replenish

the insignificant losses of the American Armed Forces in the war but also boost the deployment of the American Army and Navy as well as provide aid to its Allies in the anti-Hitler coalition.

In being guided by strategic interests, the U.S. imperialist circles in the second half of 1941 had already posed the task of preparing to conduct military operations in remote theaters of operations, in the Pacific Zone and in the European Zone. This, in turn, required that serious attention be paid to strategic movements of troops and freight and these came to play a key role in planning and organizing military operations of the United States and the American-English bloc in World War II.

The chief goals in U.S. strategic movements were to increase the number and equipping of the troops in the theaters of military operations and in overseas territories, to carry out major amphibious operations as well as support the needs of the Allied economies.

The decisions concerning the directions and scale of the strategic movements were taken by the U.S. superior military-political leadership in accord with the over-all plans of the military operations in various regions during the entire war. The plans of the American movements, as a rule, were coordinated with the plans of the British Military Command. A joint American-English committee was established and functioned actively consisting of the chiefs of staffs of the armed services and after preliminary agreements between the supreme commanders-in-chief the committee issued general strategic directives, it established the amounts of weapon production, it defined the zones of responsibility and the procedure for cooperation between the Allies, it allocated resources in the theaters of operations, planned sea shipments and so forth.

The operational plans for the movement of American troops and cargo were worked out by the U.S. Chief of Staff Committee. Under its aegis was the Joint Committee for Military Movements, the Commission for Naval Shipments and the Joint Supply Agency. Movements of troops and cargo from the United States were handled by the Defense Department of this country, while the Operations Agency of the American Army Staff determined their scope, the requirements for transport and on this basis planned the process of mobilizing human contingents for the ground forces and air forces, the constituting and training of the new formations and units, and through the Commission for Sea Movements established the procedure for employing the sea transport.

Transport aviation at the beginning of the 1940s could not provide significant air shipments either for personnel or freight and for this reason a predominant portion of the strategic movements (almost 100 percent of the total amount) was assumed by the maritime transport fleet. In the "Victory Program" announced by the U.S. president on 6 January 1942, along with building up the

production of weapons and military equipment, there was to be a sharp increase in the construction of transport vessels, bringing this up to 8 million gross tons of total tonnage a year.(1)

During the period from December 1941 through August 1945, the United States built chiefly dry-cargo transport ships with a total deadweight (carrying capacity) of 48.4 million tons, and from October 1942, the intensity of completing such vessels exceeded 1 million gross registered tons a month, that is, around 100 large sea-going vessels of the Liberty class were launched monthly. The losses of dry-cargo transport vessels from enemy air and fleet operations exceeded the newly completed tonnage only until July 1942. From April 1943, due to the measures taken to escort convoys and to the general weakening of the Axis forces, ship losses were less than 20 percent than the total number of newly launched.(2)

While at the beginning of 1943, the United States possessed dry-cargo vessels with a total tonnage of around 15.5 grt, by the end of World War II the figure was already 39.2 million grt. Moreover, the United States during the war succeeded in almost tripling the tonnage of its tanker fleet bringing it up to 15 million grt. In mid-1943, the U.S. Army had available around 780 vessels with a total passenger capacity of up to 270,000 men, and over 510 of these were making trips across the Atlantic. In August 1945, the American Army possessed approximately 1,600 vessels with a total passenger capacity of over 660,000 men, with approximately 1,200 vessels operating in the Pacific.(3)

The transporting of ground troop formations, as a rule, was organized by echelons. In the first echelon they usually relocated the division's forward detachment and in the subsequent ones, the division's headquarters, the main and rear echelons. (The cargo characteristics of the U.S. ground troop formations are given in Table 1.)

Table 1*: Cargo Characteristics of U.S. Ground Troop Formations (as of 1945)

Basic Indicators	Infantry Division	Armored Division
Number of personnel, thousand men	14.3	11.0
Number of wheeled and tracked vehicles, units	2,230	2,684
Weight of wheeled and tracked vehicles, thousand measurement tons	32.2	60.2
Weight of logistic supplies for 30 days, thousand measurement tons	18.7	37.8

* R. Leighton, R. Coakley, "Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945," p 823.

The move from America to Europe on fast vessels took 5-8 days, on ordinary transport 10-13 days, to the Mediterranean zone it required 12-14 days, and to the Southwestern Pacific 18-22 days.(4)

By the start of the war against Japan, of the 36 U.S. ground troop divisions, only three were overseas (in the Philippines and Hawaii).(5) After the Japanese attack, the United States considered the primary task to be the defense of the Hawaiian Islands, Dutch Harbor, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, Rangoon and the routes to China. By the end of December 1941, some 15,000 soldiers and officers had been delivered to the Hawaiian Islands by fast transport as well as 77,800 measurement tons(6) of military cargo.(7) At the same time, 2,000 men and almost 46,000 tons of weapons, military equipment and materiel had been moved to Alaska, with more than 10,000 men and 100,000 tons of cargo to other regions of the American continent.(8)

Upon orders of the American Command in the first half of 1942, around 230,000 men and 2.4 million tons of cargo were sent to various regions of the Pacific and this was over 50 percent of all the shipments from the U.S.A. beyond the continent in that period; there was also a significant amount of aviation and artillery. At that time, 74,000 men and 0.6 million tons of cargo arrived in Europe, 92,000 men and 91.4 million tons of cargo in the zone of the American continent. From April through October 1942, some 11 ground troop divisions were transported out of the United States, including 5 to Great Britain and Iceland, and 6 to the Pacific Islands (Hawaiian, Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand) and to Australia.(9)

By the end of 1942, the Americans and their Allies had reestablished the groupings of armed forces around the perimeter of the expanse occupied by the Japanese: on the Aleutian Islands and in Alaska, on the Hawaiian Islands, in Australia and the Southwestern Pacific, in the Indian Ocean and in India.

The U.S. Armed Forces in 1942 more than doubled, while the number of ground troop divisions rose, respectively, from 36 to 74. Along with infantry and armored formations, airborne ones were also organized. The number of aircraft increased by 2.5-fold and exceeded 11,600 units.(10) All of this presupposed intensified shipments of troops and various cargo.

Troop movements to Great Britain in the third quarter of 1942 (177,000 men), that is, more than 60 percent of all the movements made during this period(11) and the subsequent, at the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, shift of effort into North Africa show the well-known hesitations of the American military-political leadership in choosing the axes for concentrating the main efforts in the fight against Germany.

The preparations for and carrying out of the invasion of Africa were done in a situation of a strengthening material base of the American Armed Forces and transport, the weakening of Germany and the isolating of Japan. As a total in the 4th quarter of 1942 until the second quarters of 1943, 460,000 men and more than 6.7

million tons of freight were delivered to the Mediterranean zone (chiefly, to North Africa). This was around 50 percent of the volume of all the strategic U.S. shipments at this time. Simultaneously, it was possible to send over 250,000 men and 3.5 million tons of cargo to the Pacific. The volume of strategic movements in the zone of the American continent over the designated time reached 120,000 men and 3.4 million tons of freight. During this period maritime transport, due to increased production and due to increased losses of transport vessels, was able to completely satisfy the needs of the Armed Forces.(12) The United States continued to develop military production, using the exceptionally favorable situation in which this state found itself. The war was being waged far from the Western Hemisphere and the American Armed Forces as yet were taking only a limited part in military operations. The United States had a reserve of time to shift the economy to a wartime footing and for developing the defense industry. At the same time, the American ruling circles, in benefiting from the fact that the main forces of Nazi Germany, the leading power in the Nazi-militaristic bloc, were tied down on the Soviet-German Front, continued to carry out a line aimed at ensuring its decisive influence in various parts of the world. The U.S. military-political leadership during the war endeavored to create conditions which would make it possible for American imperialism to occupy a predominant position in the postwar world.

In drawing up the plans for the deployment of troops in the overseas theaters of operations and in the actual course of it, in 1943, when direct preparations had started for the invasion of Europe, one is struck by the desire of the American leadership for an above-strengthening of the troop groupings in the Pacific and in the Mediterranean zone to the detriment of the grouping in Great Britain.

According to the plan adopted in March 1943 for the movements of American troops, by the end of 1943, more than 1 million men were to be in Great Britain, 753,000 men in the Pacific Zone and 433,000 men in the Mediterranean. However, by the designated time the American grouping in the Pacific had been brought up to 913,000 men, and in the Mediterranean zone there were almost 600,000 men. At the same time in Great Britain there were 770,000 men, that is, there were almost 250,000 men less than had been planned.(13) The American side explained this by the growing needs of the active theaters and by the limited capabilities of maritime shipments, concealing the active reticence of the U.S. military-political leadership to open a second front in Europe in 1943 or the beginning of 1944.

Only from June 1943 did troop and cargo movements begin to increase to Europe. As a total during the period from the third quarter of 1943 to the first quarter of 1945, around 2.9 million men and over 34.3 million tons of cargo were sent to the European Zone (Great Britain and France), that is, respectively, 57.4 percent and 42.3 percent of the total volume of U.S. strategic movements.

Moreover, approximately 580,000 men and 17.1 million tons of cargo were delivered to the Mediterranean Zone (chiefly to Italy). During this period approximately 1.4 million men and 24.8 million tons of various cargo were sent to the Pacific Zone.(14)

The movements of troops and cargo from the United States to Great Britain in the interests of preparing for the Normandy landing were carried out from January 1943 through June 1944. As a total during this period, it was possible to deliver more than 1.7 million men and 15.6 million tons of freight. Troop shipments went on particularly actively beginning in November 1943, when they began to transport 130,000-170,00 men a month. Cargo deliveries rose sharply in the last 4 months before the landing. At that time, around 1.5 million tons of freight was arriving monthly in Great Britain.(15)

From June through December 1944, the Allies continuously carried out the plan for moving troops and strategic cargo necessary for conducting the offensive operations in France, Italy and on the territory of Nazi Germany. Over this time, the convoys had ferried over a million men to the British Isles. This shows that the Anglo-American Command was able to securely support its lines of communications in the Atlantic. During the period of maximum activity in the strategic shipments to Europe at the beginning of 1944 over the northern transatlantic sealanes between the U.S. and British ports, there were around 1,000 vessels at sea organized in 20-22 convoys.(16)

In the second half of 1944, in line with the reduced threat from Nazi submarines, a significant number of merchant ships crossed the Atlantic without escorts. But those of

them which transported troops and the most valuable cargo as before traveled in the so-called merchant convoys. In the second half of 1944, there were 158 such convoys which included around 7,600 merchant ships traveling between the ports of America and England. The number of merchant vessels in each of the convoys reached 150-160 units. Moreover, operational convoys of fast vessels were organized for delivering troops. In the second half of 1944, 111 operational convoys arrived in English ports.(17)

As a result of the strategic movements of American Armed Forces by January 1945, the number of their troops and forces in the theaters of operation of World War II was approximately 6.5 million men. Another 5.4 million American servicemen did not participate in the fighting and were stationed in the United States as well as at numerous air force and naval bases. In 1945, the increased number of troops fighting in Europe was basically due to the United States. For example, at the end of April of this year, of the 88 Allied divisions located there, 61 were American.(18)

The build-up of American troops in the Pacific zone began in July 1943, with a sharp rise in shipments into this zone from the first month of 1945. In the second and third quarters of 1945, around 500,000 men (up to 80 percent of the total amount of all troop movements during this period) and 10.9 million tons of freight (around 50 percent) were sent into the Pacific zone. During this period only 100,000 men and 11 million tons of cargo arrived in Europe.(19) (The deployment of ground troop divisions in keeping with the strategic regroupings in the theaters of operations during the period of World War II is shown in Table 2.)

Table 2*: Deployment of U.S. Ground Troop Divisions in Overseas Theaters of Operations

Deployment areas	7 Dec 41	30 Jun 42	31 Dec 42	31 Dec 43	30 Jun 44	31 Dec 44	30 Jun 45	31 Aug 45
In European zone	—	3	8	17	29	57	65	51
Including:								
Great Britain	—	2	3	11	8	3	—	—
Mediterranean	—	—	6	6	8	6	7	5
Northwestern Europe	—	—	—	—	13	41	49	38
Southern France	—	—	—	—	—	7	9	8
In Pacific zone	3	8	9	13	21	21	21	22
Including								
Central	1	2	2	5	6	6	5	5
Southern	—	3	4	4	5	—	—	—
Southwestern	2	2	2	4	10	15	16	17
Northern	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Total for overseas theaters of operations	3	11	17	30	50	78	86	73

* Calculated by the author from: R. Leighton and R. Coakley, "Global Logistics and Strategy. 1943-1934," Washington, 1957.

In the strategic plans of the United States, the most important place was held by ensuring the survival of the sealanes, primarily in the North Atlantic. Their state reflected directly on the military-economic capabilities of the Allies, on the time of their preparation and the logistic support for the operations in the continental theaters of operations.

The Nazis gave great importance to disrupting U.S. sea movements. However, their plans for operating in the Atlantic had been compiled without considering the actual balance of forces and capabilities of the sides. The Navy was focused solely on the "tonnage war," that is, the monthly destruction of vessels with a total tonnage of 7,000-8,000 gross registered tons. Here they did not consider the nature and direction of the freight being shipped. On the particularly important U.S. and British sealanes, a dependable protection was organized and this reduced the effectiveness of German submarine operations.

At the same time, in the concluding stage of the war, due to the rapid advance of the Soviet troops to the West, the Nazi Command threw all its forces to hold the Eastern Front. Adm Donitz, in explaining the reasons for the reduced intensity of subboat utilization, wrote subsequently: "After the breaching of the front by the Russians in January 1945, when the territory, the yards, the training areas and support points in the eastern part of the Baltic Sea were threatened or had been completely lost, it became finally clear that the new class of submarines capable of opposing modern ASW equipment could no longer be widely employed.... The large naval units were switched to supporting the Eastern Front." (20) He further stated that in the last months of the war, 50,000 sailors were switched to the land front opposite the Soviet troops. Moreover, the German assessment of the capabilities for the United States and Great Britain to replace tonnage was understated.

In the Pacific theater, the Japanese Naval Command, having focused its basic efforts on capturing and holding important supply points in remote areas as well as destroying the main forces of the U.S. Navy, did not pay proper attention to disrupting the American sealanes. This provided an opportunity for the United States almost with impunity to build up forces in any area of the enormous ocean theater and permitted it to repel Japanese naval strikes.

As a whole, during World War II the United States gained significant experience in strategic troop and cargo movements which were of an intercontinental, global nature and were carried out with high intensity, particularly in the concluding stage of the war. For this the nation developed special vessels and in addition made extensive use of the general-purpose mobilized means of transport, including those of the Allied countries.

At the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, along with continuing to strengthen the zone of the American continent and the Pacific region, the United States began building up its European grouping and prepared and carried out the invasion of North Africa. From mid-1943 until the end of the first quarter of 1945, U.S. basic efforts in the moving of troops, weapons and various materiel were directed at preparing for and landing in Sicily and Normandy as well as supporting subsequent military operations in Europe. In the course of World War II, the United States moved across the ocean a total of 127 million measurement tons of freight as well as 7.3 million men of the Armed Forces and other passengers. (21)

After the end of World War II, during the period of hostilities in Korea and Vietnam and in other wars and military conflicts, in the course of supporting the aggression of their Allies as well as in numerous exercises to strengthen the existing troop and naval groupings and develop new ones in possible theaters of operations throughout the world, the Americans have improved the organization of strategic shipments and these have assumed a combined nature. Here maximum use is made of the capabilities of sea and air means of delivery.

Footnotes

1. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1975, p 441; Vol 5, pp 53-54.
2. Leighton, R. and Coakley, R., "Global Logistics and Strategy. 1943-1945," Washington, pp 842-843.
3. Ibid., pp 842-844.
4. Calculated by the author from: Matloff, M. and Snell, E., "Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942," Washington, 1953, p 551.
5. Ibid., pp 553-554.
6. The measurement of cargo ton is the characteristics of cargo and cargo capacity and corresponds to 80 ft³ of cargo or cargo area.
7. Leighton, R. and Coakley, R., op. cit., p 147.
8. Ibid., pp 732-733.
9. Ibid.; Matloff, M. and Snell, E., op. cit., p 551.
10. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Vol 5, 1975, p 463.
11. Leighton, R. and Coakley, R., op. cit., p 732.
12. Ibid.
13. Matloff, M. and Snell, E., op. cit., p 391.

14. Leighton, R. and Coakley, R., op. cit., p 732, 733; 834-835.
15. Ibid., p 838.
16. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Vol 9, 1978, p 342; Vol 8, p 269.
17. Ibid., Vol 9, p 336.
18. Ibid., Vol 10, 1979, pp 31, 452.
19. Leighton, R. and Coakley, R., op. cit., p 842-843.
20. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Vol 10, p 271.
21. Leighton, R. and Coakley, R., op. cit., p 5.

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